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Vol.29

Cambridge Bible

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THE CAMBRIDGE BIBLE
FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

GENERAL EDITOR FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT:—
A. F. KIRKPATRICK, D.D.
DEAN OF ELY

THE BOOKS OF
NAHUM, HABAKKUK AND ZEPHANIAH

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
C. F. CLAY, MANAGER
LONDON : FETTER LANE, E.C. 4

NEW YORK : THE MACMILLAN CO.
BOMBAY
CALCUTTA } MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD.
MADRAS
TORONTO : THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TOKYO : MARUZEN-KABUSHIKI-KAISHA

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THE BOOKS OF

NAHUM, HABAKKUK AND ZEPHANIAH

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Adapted to the text of the Revised Version
with some supplementary notes

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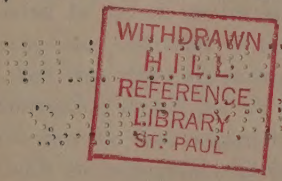

Cambridge:
at the University Press

1920

THE SCIENCE MUSEUM
OF MINNESOTA

BS
491
.C3
vol.29

First Edition 1896. *Reprinted* 1899, 1905.
Adapted to R.V. and revised 1920.

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PREFACE

BY THE

GENERAL EDITOR FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE present General Editor for the Old Testament in the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges desires to say that, in accordance with the policy of his predecessor the Bishop of Worcester, he does not hold himself responsible for the particular interpretations adopted or for the opinions expressed by the editors of the several Books, nor has he endeavoured to bring them into agreement with one another. It is inevitable that there should be differences of opinion in regard to many questions of criticism and interpretation, and it seems best that these differences should find free expression in different volumes. He has endeavoured to secure, as far as possible, that the general scope and character of the series should be observed, and that views which have a reasonable claim to consideration should not be ignored, but he has felt it best that the final responsibility should, in general, rest with the individual contributors.

A. F. KIRKPATRICK.

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The Text adopted in this Edition is that of the R.V. The Commentary is in the main that of Dr Davidson, but it has been revised, and somewhat amplified.

"Woe, woe, the great city."

NAHUM

INTRODUCTION

§ 1. Birthplace of the Prophet.

The name Nahum probably meant consoling or consoler, comforter (cf. iii. 7). The name does not occur again in the Old Testament, though it is found in Luke iii. 25, and in the Mishna, as well as in Phœnician inscriptions, while a similar form Naham is found in 1 Chr. iv. 19.

The term "the Elkoshite" implies that the prophet belonged to a place named Elkosh[1], just as the appellation "the Morashtite" describes Micah as a native of Moresheth-Gath (Mic. i. 1); cf. 1 Kings xi. 29, xvii. 1; Jer. xxix. 24, 27. Elkosh has been identified (1) with the modern Elkush, a town lying two days' journey north of Mosul (Nineveh); (2) with a village in Galilee, the ruins of which were seen by Jerome; and (3) with a place in the south-west of Judea, not far from Lachish. (1) In the first case Nahum would have been a descendant of some of the families of northern Israel carried captive by the Assyrians. In 2 Kings xvii. 6, xviii. 11 these captives are said to have been placed "in Halah, and in Habor, on the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." The LXX reads "On Halah and Habor, rivers of Gozan, and in the mountains of the Medes." The Habor is the well known river rising near Nisibis and falling into the Euphrates at Circesium (not to be confused with Carchemish); while Gozan is the province around it, to which belonged such cities as Haran and Reseph[2]. The situation of Ḥalaḥ is uncertain[3]. Winckler has suggested that for Ḥalaḥ we should read Baliḥ, a river also in Mesopotamia, further north than the Habor[4]. There is another Habor, which falls into the Tigris, considerably north of Elkush; this,

[1] The name Elkosh may mean "Kosh is God." There was an Edomite deity of a name similar to this.

[2] Delitzsch, *Paradies*, p. 183 seq.

[3] Cf. Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the O.T.* (E.T.), vol. i. pp. 267—8.

[4] *Alttest. Untersuch.* pp. 108—110.

however, is a small stream, and appears excluded by the designation "river of Gozan." It is of less consequence to ascertain accurately the settlements of the captive Israelites, as the chief point of interest is whether Nahum was familiar with Nineveh and possibly an eyewitness of the operations against her, and this must be determined from his prophecy. The modern Elkush is a fair-sized town. The name looks Arabic, and if it were so would not be older than the 7th century A.D.; it might however be an Arabized ancient name. The place appears to be of considerable antiquity, though naturally all references to it are later than the Arabic era. The connexion of Nahum with it may very well be the result of a combination, due to the similarity of the name to that of the prophet's native place and to the fact that he prophesied against Nineveh. Such traditions are apt to arise in Christian and Mohammedan circles. Of a similar kind is the name Nebi Yunus (the prophet Jonah) borne by a part of the ruins of Nineveh, and the Monastery of Job in the Hauran. The tradition of the prophet's grave at Elkush is said by Assemani to go no further back than the 16th century, and the name itself is first attested in the 8th century. Layard describes the place as follows:

"Alkosh is a very considerable Christian village. The inhabitants, who were formerly pure Chaldaeans, have been converted to Roman Catholicism. It contains, according to a very general tradition, the tomb of Nahum, the prophet—the Alkoshite as he is called in the introduction to his prophecies. It is a place held in great reverence by Mohammedans and Christians, but especially by Jews, who keep the building in repair, and flock here in great numbers at certain seasons of the year. The tomb is a simple plaster box, covered with green cloth, and standing at the upper end of a large chamber. On the walls of the room are slips of paper, upon which are written, in distorted Hebrew characters, religious exhortations, and the dates and particulars of the visits of various Jewish families. The house containing the tomb is a modern building. There are no inscriptions nor fragments of any antiquity about the place[1]."

[1] *Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. i. p. 233, 3rd ed. 1849.

The prophet's descriptions of the siege and capture of Nineveh are very graphic, but being predictive they are to some extent imaginative. They might certainly have well been written by one familiar with the situation of the city, though it may be doubted if there is anything which is absolutely conclusive. The knowledge which the prophet exhibits of No-amon appears little less precise. Certain terms are used which, if well understood, might turn the scale in favour of local knowledge, but they are obscure. Examples are *Huzzab* (ii. 7), a word used of the queen; the military term *sokek* (ii. 5), and the title *tiphsar* (iii. 17), which however occurs again, Jer. li. 27. The phrase "gates of the rivers" (ii. 6) is also of somewhat uncertain meaning, but, in whatever sense it be taken, a general knowledge of the situation of Nineveh would sufficiently explain its use. And the same is true of the references to the "brickkiln" (iii. 14 marg. "brickmould"), to "the merchants" which flocked to the city (iii. 16), and to the masses of the people drawn from every quarter that filled it (ii. 8). On the other hand, if the prophet drew his descent from the ten tribes it is strange that he should reveal so little interest in them. It is Judah that engrosses his attention. It is Sennacherib that "imagined evil against the Lord" (i. 11), not Tiglath-pileser or Sargon. It is Judah that hears the good tidings of Nineveh's downfall, and through which "the wicked one" shall no more pass (i. 15). There may be a reference to the northern kingdom in "Israel" (ii. 2), but even so, Israel is subordinated to Judah, and Judean prophets, like Jeremiah, also predict the restoration of the exiles of the North (Jer. iii. 12). The right of ch. i. to be regarded as an integral part of the prophecy is denied by some authors; at any rate, all the references in it appear to be to Judah (i. 11, 13, 15), and in the other chapters allusions, except that in ii. 2 (properly part of ch. i.), are to the nations in general (ii. 13, iii. 4, 19).

(2) The Galilean tradition appears more precise. Jerome in the preface to his Commentary on Nahum says: "Helkesei is still at this day a hamlet in Galilee, small indeed, and scarcely shewing traces by ruins of ancient buildings, but for all that known to the Jews, and pointed out to me by a

guide." The form Helkesei seems rather like a reproduction of the Heb. adjective, Elkoshite, than strictly the name of the place itself. But it would be unwarrantable for this reason to discredit the whole statement. Jerome, no doubt, saw the place which he describes; whether its identification with the birthplace of the prophet was an inference of his own, or a suggestion of his guide, or a current tradition is not stated, though the last is the most natural meaning. It may be inferred perhaps from the name Capernaum (Kephar Nahum, village of Nahum) that a tradition did exist of the prophet's connexion with Galilee. Elcese has been supposed to be El Kozah, two and a half hours south-west of Tibnin, between Ramieh (Rama in Naphtali) and Bint Umm Jebeil. Other references to the Galilean origin of the prophet appear to be based on Jerome's statement, and can scarcely be adduced in corroboration of it. If a native of Galilee, Nahum would be a descendant of some of the families left in the land; but if an Israelite of the North, his failure to shew any interest in his countrymen remains, as before, singular. Favoured however by the decline of the Assyrian power, Josiah pushed his influence into the northern kingdom in the interests of reform, and Nahum might have attached himself to Judah. The appearance of a prophet in northern Israel at this time has little probability, and certainly the references in ch. i., if nothing else were known of Nahum, would suggest that he was himself a Judean. From John vii. 52 it may be inferred that the Galilean tradition was little known in the first century.

(3) There is a tradition to the effect that Nahum was a native of the South. This is found in the work *On the Prophets, how they died and where they are buried*, usually ascribed, probably wrongly, to Epiphanius, a native of the south of Judah, and subsequently (A.D. 367) bishop of Constantia (Salamis) in Cyprus. The author writes of Nahum: "He came from Elkesei beyond Jordan toward Begabar, of the tribe of Simeon." The tribe of Simeon was located in the south-west of Judah, and had no connexion with the region beyond Jordan. The text of the passage is evidently corrupt. In 1855 Tischendorf published two other recensions of the

work of Epiphanius. In one of them the passage runs: "Nahum, son of Elkesaios, was of Jesbe, of the tribe of Simeon"; and in the other: "Nahum was of Elkesem beyond Betabarem, of the tribe of Simeon." In neither does the phrase "beyond Jordan" appear, and it does not seem to be original. Further welcome light was cast upon the passage by Prof. Nestle of Tübingen from Syriac sources. In the translation of the Old Testament into Syriac, made by Paul of Tella in 617, the notices of the prophets current in their collective form under the name of Epiphanius are appended by the translator to the several prophets to whom they respectively refer. In the notice of Nahum the Syriac reads: "Nahum was of Elkosh, beyond Bêt Gabrê, of the tribe of Simeon." This may be assumed to be the genuine reading. The Syriac Bêt Gabrê is Beit-Jibrîn, the ancient Eleutheropolis, N.E. of Lachish. The phrase "beyond Beit-Jibrîn" is to be explained by the position of the place in which the writer lived or which he reckoned from, though this is unknown[1].

These conflicting traditions leave the prophet's birthplace quite uncertain.

§ 2. Occasion of the Prophecy.

There are two fixed points between which the date of the prophecy must lie: the capture of No-amon or Thebes by the armies of Assurbanipal, cir. B.C. 661, and the destruction of Nineveh by the Medes, cir. 608—6. Some event or some combination of powers menacing to Nineveh, falling within these fifty or sixty years, must have given occasion to the oracle, for the catastrophe to No-amon referred to can hardly be any other than its capture by the Assyrians. In ch. iii. 8 the prophet asks Nineveh, Art thou better than No-amon, that was situate among the rivers? And it has been argued by Schrader[2] and others that the fall of No-amon must have been recent and still fresh in men's memory. The argument is not

[1] *Zeitschr. des Deutsch. Pal. Vereins*, i. 122 seq., translated in Quarterly Statement of Pal. Exp. Fund, 1879, p. 136 seq. Cf. G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geography*, p. 231, note 1, and Budde, art. "Elkoshite" in *E.B.*

[2] *Cun. Inscr. and O.T.* (E.T.), vol. ii. pp. 149 ff.

conclusive. The prophet Zechariah (xiv. 5) refers to the earthquake under Uzziah, though he probably lived centuries later. The history of Egypt was always followed closely by Israel, and events of interest are alluded to very long after they took place, as for example the building of the city of Zoan (Numb. xiii. 22). On the other hand Wellhausen thinks that the question of the prophet would have something illogical in it, if reference were to the fall of No-amon before the Assyrians, for its fall might seem a proof of their might. He is therefore led to postulate some otherwise unrecorded capture of Thebes in the latter part of the 7th century. But Hebrew prophets considered less the immediate agents than the supreme agent, Jehovah. It was He that overthrew No-amon, as He would overthrow Nineveh. In answer however to Schrader it may be said that it would certainly be easier to overlook or forget the immediate agents, the Assyrians, if No-amon's fall were an event comparatively distant.

Other scholars (W. R. Smith, "Nahum," *Encyc. Brit.*) have expressed the opinion that no particular foe of Nineveh was in the eye of the prophet, whose oracle reposes entirely on general principles of the divine government of the world. This view appears based mainly on ch. i., and would reduce ch. ii., iii. to very artificial rhetoric. The impression conveyed by these chapters is that in the time of the prophet Nineveh was menaced by some actual foe; and the general impression is confirmed by the particular words, "The hammer is come up against thee" (ii. 1). There are some prophecies which appear suggested just by the moral condition of the world: injustice and wrongdoing were so rampant that the prophet could not repress a presentiment of imminent judgement (Is. ii., iii., vi.); but usually prophecies are suggested by some great movement among the nations, in which Jehovah's presence is already seen.

Events which might possibly have given occasion to the prophet's oracle are these: (1) the sanguinary struggle between Assurbanipal and his brother Shamash-shum-ukin, whom he had appointed viceroy of Babylon (652—48). (2) The inroad of the Scythians (cir. 628?). (3) The attack

on Assyria by Phraortes (Fravartis) king of the Medes, who fell in the campaign (cir. 626). (4) The renewed war with Assyria and siege of Nineveh under Cyaxares (Uvakhshathra), the son and successor of Phraortes (cir. 624, Herod. i. 103). Cyaxares is said to have been forced to raise the siege owing to the invasion of his own country by the Scythians. There may be some confusion of dates, but Scythian influence on Media appears substantiated by the fact, on which scholars seem agreed, that Astyages (Ishtuvêgu), the next and last king of the Medes, was a Scythian. (5) The final siege of Nineveh by Cyaxares and the Medes, before which the city fell (608—6). It is a point not easy to decide whether the Chaldean Nabopolassar, who had succeeded in seating himself upon the throne of Babylon since 625, lent active military support to the Medes in the siege, or merely looked benevolently on while Cyaxares pulled the chestnuts out of the fire[1].

With the exception of (1) and (5) little is known of the events named beyond their mere occurrence. An actual or threatened attack of the Scythians on Assyria (2) is very much a hypothesis, not improbable but without historical support. If Nahum was a native of Assyria, the advance of these hordes from the north might have given occasion to his prophecy; if he belonged to Palestine he would in all probability, like Zephaniah and Jeremiah, have been more occupied with the destinies of his own country than with those of Nineveh.

With the death of Assurbanipal (cir. 626) the Assyrian empire began to break up. The Chaldeans of South Babylonia were able to seat their prince upon the throne of Babylon in 625. Possibly Assyria came to terms with the Chaldean usurper and acknowledged him as viceroy, and Nabopolassar might not trouble himself much about a name. About the same time the Median kingdom which had been gradually consolidating itself felt strong enough to enter upon a struggle

[1] According to the stele of Nabuna'id, Nabopolassar (Nabu apal usur = Nabu protect the son) found a helper in the King of the Umman-manda. This people is generally identified with the Medes, though they may have been a Scythian tribe.

with Assyria. This movement was more vital as it was an attack upon Assyria proper. The old lion, though enfeebled, proved himself still dangerous; Phraortes was defeated and fell in battle. As Cyaxares succeeded his father and continued the war with Assyria, in which he had such success that he was able to lay siege to the capital, only a short time can have intervened between the events marked (3) and (4). Either might have furnished occasion for the prophecy of Nahum, though the successful campaign of Cyaxares was more likely to inspire such hopes as the prophet expresses, and the fame of it would be more certain to penetrate to the west, supposing Nahum a prophet of Judah. Ewald pronounces in favour of the attempt of Phraortes, as it was the earliest attack upon Assyria (i. 12), while Kuenen and others think the siege of Cyaxares has in it more elements of probability. It is obvious that from our ignorance of the circumstances the most that can be said of either of these events or of any others is that they were of such a kind that they might have been the occasion of the prophet's oracle.

The fratricidal war between Assurbanipal and Shamas-shum-ukin, the Babylonian viceroy (652—48), has been thought by others the most probable occasion of the prophecy. There arose at this time a wide and powerful combination against the empire. The Chaldeans of South Babylonia, Elam and other peoples allied themselves with Shamas-shum-ukin, and, though the western states for the most part remained quiet, Tyre and some Arabian tribes threw themselves into the struggle. The movement, however, was rather a rebellion and war of independence on the part of Babylon and the Chaldean states, than an attack upon the Assyrian empire. Assyria proper was not seriously menaced. From the first the Assyrian king assumed the offensive and carried the war into the territory of his opponents, on whom he inflicted a series of crushing defeats. Babylon was invested and reduced to such straits that the populace, maddened by famine, seized Shamash-shum-ukin and burned him alive (Tiele, *Bab.-Assyr. Gesch.* p. 376 seq.). The incident is one of the most bloody in the annals of Assyria, but the extraordinary promptitude, and it must be added ferocity, with which

the revolt was stamped out shewed that the spirit and vigour of the empire were as yet little impaired. Such a prophecy as Nahum's could hardly have been uttered at any period of the struggle, except perhaps just at the moment when rumours of the coalition began to circulate, or, at the furthest, before the Assyrian armies took the field. The prophecy all through suggests some danger much more vital and pressing.

It is usually assumed (e.g. by Kuenen) that the siege of Nineveh by Cyaxares, which ended in its capture, is too late to have been the occasion of Nahum's oracle. The exact date of the fall of Nineveh is not ascertained; it must have been cir. 608—6. But in 608 the fatal field of Megiddo on which Josiah fell put Palestine into the hands of Necho. The prophecy could hardly be later than this date. It is not to be forgotten, however, that Nineveh sustained the siege of the Medes for two years, and no doubt the invaders, as the language of Nahum implies (iii. 12, 13), met with resistance more or less prolonged before they were able to penetrate to the capital and invest it. How long the war lasted is quite uncertain. In i. 13 reference is made to the "yoke" of Assyria, and this yoke it is thought could hardly have been felt to be galling in the years after 621, when Josiah was extending his reforms even in northern Israel. The historical background of ch. i. is very indefinite. The only event of history referred to is the invasion of Sennacherib, who is "the wicked one," type or genius of the Assyrian monarchy. Apart from the other difficulties of i. 13 its language is very general; and, nominally at any rate, up to 608 Judah was still a vassal of Assyria. The historian of the Kings in narrating Necho's invasion of this date still says that "he went up against the king of Assyria" (2 Kings xxiii. 29). It would therefore be unwise to exclude the final siege of Nineveh from view. A date 610—8 for the prophecy, is well within the range of possibility. If the "distress" of Nineveh referred to were the final one (i. 9, 12) the descriptions of the prophecy would acquire a reality and naturalness which they otherwise want, and the general characteristics of Hebrew prophecy would be more truly conserved. The language of Wellhausen is entirely justified when he says that "but for Herodotus it would never have come

into anybody's head to doubt that the prophecy of Nahum and the downfall of Nineveh coincided with one another" (*Skizzen*, v. 156). He refers particularly to iii. 18, 19; and remarks that the last verse of the book almost suggests that Nineveh had already fallen.

There are therefore two possible dates for the book: (*a*) cir. B.C. 625 connecting it with the first siege of Nineveh by Cyaxares; (*b*) cir. B.C. 610 some few years before its fall. The former date is somewhat supported by i. 13, 15, which suggest that the yoke of Assyria was still pressing severely on Judah. If, as several scholars hold, these verses are to be eliminated as not part of Nahum's prophecy, the second date (B.C. 610), which is that advocated by Marti, seems decidedly preferable. In the words of Kennedy, quoted by Driver, ch. ii. and iii. seem to "palpitate with the conviction that the utter end of the Assyrian is at hand."

The closing years of the Assyrian empire are covered with obscurity. Two rulers followed Assurbanipal, though little is known of them beyond their names. The family of Sargon, the last Assyrian dynasty, is as follows:

B.C. 722 Sargon.
705 Sennacherib.
681 Esarhaddon.
668 Assurbanipal.
626 Two other rulers, Assur-itil-ili-ukin and Sinsharishkun (Sarakos)[1].
608—6 Fall of Nineveh.

§ 3. Integrity of the Prophecy.

The question has been raised by several writers whether ch. i. be an integral part of the prophecy. A Pastor in Württemberg named G. Frohnmeyer seems to have been the first to notice the alphabetical structure in Nah. i. 3—7, and the hint was further worked out by Franz Delitzsch in his Commentary on the Psalms (1873). In 1880 G. Bickell tried to

[1] Winckler, *Altorient. Unters.* p. 63. Others as Tiele, p. 413, read the names somewhat differently, Belzikirishkun and Asurêtililâni.

shew that all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet were contained in *vv.* 2—10. In 1893 Gunkel struck out a new line in maintaining that the alphabetical arrangement extended to ii. 3, and embraced all the Hebrew letters, and his general scheme was accepted, though with many modifications, by Bickell. Both scholars made repeated attempts to fit in the various letters by more or less violent emendations, but the general consensus of scholars is that whereas there are fairly clear traces of an acrostical arrangement up to i. 9 (so Gray and Sievers) or i. 10 (so Marti and Powis Smith), any attempt to carry it beyond that is little more than an academic exercise. G. Happl in his Commentary on the book (1902) thinks that the original acrostic has been independently worked into two poems, which have afterwards been combined. Duhm (in 1910) begins the acrostic with i. 3, placing *v.* 2 after *v.* 9*a*.

In point of fact *vv.* 2 and 3 seem to be alternative introductions to the acrostic: either can be made without much difficulty to supply the first two letters of the alphabet, but they are not both wanted. The third letter (*g*) begins *v.* 4, but the fourth letter (*d*) is missing unless the word for "languisheth" is altered. This, however, can be done without serious derangement. *v.* 5 begins correctly with the fifth letter (*h*), and has the sixth letter (*v*) at the beginning of the second half. The seventh letter (*z*) can only be got to begin *v.* 6 by transposition and alteration. The eighth letter (*ḥ*) and the ninth (*ṭ*) are in their proper places, and the tenth (*i*) is also right if *and* is omitted in the second half of *v.* 7. *v.* 8 contains the eleventh letter (*k*), though not at the beginning. Beyond this the alphabetical structure can only be retained at the cost of considerable alteration.

It must be acknowledged that the text of ch. i. appears to be in some disorder. In some places, e.g. *vv.* 10, 12, the language is unusual both in diction and syntax; while the repeated alternation of address to Nineveh and Judah, ch. i. 12—ii. 3, is far from natural, and ii. 2 can hardly be in its original place between *vv.* 1 and 3 (see notes). The historical background of the chapter seems rather indefinite, the only event alluded to being Sennacherib's invasion, and this is

touched upon as if it were distant and the only incident in Assyrian history still borne in mind. The words "the wicked one shall no more pass through thee" (i. 15) need not refer to any recent aggression, cf. Joel iii. 17; Zech. ix. 8. Further, the reference to Nineveh, *v.* 8, "the place thereof" (cf. *v.* 11), is introduced in a way altogether unprepared for. In manner, too, ch. i. differs much from the other chapters. Neither is the long theological introduction in the usual style of the prophets, though perhaps not much weight need be attached to this, as it is only in breadth that the passage differs from the briefer allusions to the Theophany in Am. i. 2 and Mic. i. 3, 4.

On the other hand, considering the violence necessary to force the passage into the strait jacket of an alphabetical form some may be inclined to ask whether the supposed traces of alphabetical arrangement in the beginning of the chapter be not accidental. As has been shewn, an alphabetical arrangement can be imposed upon the passage without very extensive manipulation of the text down to *v.* 7 (the letter *Teth*), but further verses cannot be discovered without frequent transposition of words and clauses, nor even without considerable rewriting of the passage by substitution of one word for another, and the insertion of words to which there is nothing in the present text or the Versions to correspond. The restorations, too, proposed by Bickell are often extraordinarily feeble and wanting in taste (e.g. *vv.* 10, 12). The general effect of the restoration offered is to eliminate from the piece all reference to Nineveh, and leave it a general eschatological poem, such as it is supposed very late writers delighted to construct. It would perhaps also follow that in the amalgamation of the passage with Nahum the real beginning of his prophecy in ch. ii. had been thrust out.

Recent scholars have suspected certain portions of the rest of the book. Kennedy in *H.D.B.* limits the genuine prophecy of Nahum to ii. 1, 3—iii. 19, to which Nowack adds i. 9—12, 14. Marti assigns to Nahum most of i. 11, 14, ii. 2, 4—14, iii. 1—19, relegating the acrostic i. 2—10, together with the promise of salvation i. 12 f., ii. 1, 3, to a date in the Maccabean age. Driver assigns to another prophet i. 2—8, ii. 2 and suspects also i. 13, 15 and perhaps iii. 18—20. Powis Smith assigns

to Nahum i. 11, 14, ii. 2, 4—14, iii. 1—17 and more doubtfully iii. 18, 19. It will be seen that there is a large amount of agreement that i. 12, 13 and ii. 3 are at any rate misplaced in their present position.

§ 4. Contents of the Prophecy.

Ch. i. (1) Manifestation of the Avenging God. His wrath is poured out like fire. Who shall stand before His indignation? (i. 2—6). (2) He will make an utter end of the enemies of His people (*vv.* 7—15).

Ch. ii. (1) Brilliant description of the besiegers, the siege and the defence (ii. 1—5). (2) Defence is in vain: opening of the river gates; capture of the queen and harem; flight of the populace and sack of the city, which is left a desolate ruin (*vv.* 6—10). (3) Exultation of the prophet over the destruction of the ancient den of lions (*vv.* 11—13).

Ch. iii. (1) New threat against the bloody city. The harlot who sold nations by her witchcrafts shall be exposed before the eyes of the nations. Who will be found to bemoan her? (iii. 1—7). (2) Shall she have a better fate than No-amon, which also had the waters for a rampart? (*vv.* 8—11). (3) Her outer defences fall before the invader as ripe figs fall into the mouth when the tree is shaken. Let her make ready for the siege (*vv.* 12—15). (4) Her countless merchants shall be like the young locusts which cast their skin and fly away, and her officers like the locusts which sit torpid on the hedges in the cold, but when the sun rises they spread their wings and disappear. All that hear her fate shall clap their hands over her, for she has been the enemy of mankind (*vv.* 16—19).

The prophet's language is forcible and graphic, and his descriptions condensed and brilliant. He is animated by the intensest hatred of Assyria. In ch. i. there are elements of patriotism in this feeling; in ch. ii., iii., it is purely and simply human. The prophecy is the voice of the human mind expressing its revolt against the spirit and deeds of the brutal foe of the human race, and might almost have come from the heart of any of the oppressed nationalities trodden under the foot of Assyria. It is the blood, the wiles and demonic witch-

crafts (iii. 1—4), and the spirit of the wild beast (ii. 11—13) that in the name of mankind the prophet appeals against; and if he adds the traffic and riches and luxury of Nineveh, it is only to complete the picture of the immoral spirit of the people. This universal voice of humanity is no new thing in Hebrew prophecy; it is heard in Am. i., ii.; even more distinctly in a contemporary of Nahum, Hab. i. 12—17, and all down history, as in Is. xiv. 5—8, xlvii. 7—15, and many Psalms. And the prophet is assured that the voice of mankind is also the voice of God: "Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thine emissaries shall no more be heard" (ii. 13).

Nahum differs from previous prophets, and even from some prophets of his own age, such as Zephaniah and Jeremiah, in making no allusion to the sin of his own people. The same remarkable peculiarity characterizes in great measure the prophecy of Habakkuk, a prophet of the same period. See Habakkuk, Introduction, § 2 and § 4.

The approaching fall of Nineveh occupies the whole of Nahum's thought, and he has little to say about his own people. This is the contrast between his message and that of Jeremiah. It is indeed unfair to say that "In Nahum, a representative of the old narrow and shallow prophetism finds its place in the Canon of Scripture. His point of view is essentially one with that of such men as Hananiah (Jer. xxviii.), the four hundred prophets in opposition to Micaiah ben Imlah (1 Kings xxii.), and the so-called 'false prophets' in general" (Powis Smith). Lowth's words "Of all the minor prophets not one seems to equal the loftiness, the fire, and the spirited boldness of Nahum" have often been quoted with appreciation. But in spite of his splendid and nervous poetry we miss in his message the deeper sense of sin and its necessary sequel, which characterizes the pages of Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk.

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NAHUM

THE [1]burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of 1
Nahum the Elkoshite.
The LORD is a jealous God and avengeth; the LORD 2
avengeth and is full of wrath; the LORD taketh vengeance
on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies.

[1] Or, *oracle concerning*

CH. I. THE SUPERSCRIPTION.

1. *burden of Nineveh*] Rather: **oracle of**, or, **against**. This part of the heading is probably due to the editor of the book, as the phrase is common in introducing prophecies, e.g. Is. xiii. 1 and often. The other part of the heading may very well have come from the hand of the prophet himself. The term "oracle" is from the verb "to lift up," viz. the voice, or "to take up" a parable or speech, Numb. xxiv. 3; Jer. vii. 16. The Syr. here curiously renders the word "scourge."

the vision] The term which was first applied to "prophetic intuition" (cf. Hosea xii. 10), became nearly synonymous with "prophecy." For its use in titles of books cf. Isa. i. 1; Obad. 1. On the name Nahum and the designation Elkoshite, see Introd., § 1.

2—6. AN INTRODUCTION ON THE ATTRIBUTES OF JEHOVAH, GOD OF ISRAEL.

The introduction, *vv.* 2—6, leads up to Jehovah's interposition against Nineveh: (1) *vv.* 2—3 *a* His moral attributes; (2) 3 *b*—6 the activity of these attributes when He reveals Himself in the Theophany of the tempest.

vv. 2—8 shew traces of an acrostical arrangement. See Introd., p. 10 ff.

2. *The LORD is a jealous God*] The original order of words being retained, we may render

A jealous God and vengeful is Jehovah,
Jehovah is vengeful and wrathful;
Jehovah is vengeful upon his adversaries,
And retaineth *wrath* against his enemies.

"Jealousy" is the reaction of injured self-consciousness, it is

3 The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will by no means clear *the guilty*: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the

God's resentful self-assertion when He Himself, or that which is His, as His people or land, is too nearly touched; Deut. iv. 23, 24; Josh. xxiv. 19; Ex. xx. 5, xxxiv. 14. Here His "jealousy" is awakened by the long-continued injuries inflicted on His people. The form of spelling the Heb. word "jealous" occurs again, Josh. xxiv. 19; the more usual form, Ex. xx. 5. "Full of wrath" is lit. *the possessor*, cherisher, *of wrath*; the phrase occurs again, Prov. xxix. 22, cf. Prov. xxii. 24. On the "vengeance" of God, comp. Is. lxiii. 4, "the day of vengeance was in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come"; Is. xxxiv. 8, lxi. 2. After "reserveth" (or better, "retaineth") *wrath* is understood: cf. Lev. xix. 18; Jer. iii. 5; Ps. ciii. 9.

3. Verse *3* appears to be an alternative introduction to the acrostical arrangement. If it is in place here, it continues the description of the relation of Jehovah to His enemies: He is long-suffering, delays chastisement long, but eventually takes vengeance. The meaning of the phrase "great in power" is not clear. If employed in the usual objective sense as Job ix. 4, the verse would read, "The Lord is slow to anger, but great in strength and will by no means leave unpunished" (Rom. ix. 22). If "great in power" had a sense parallel to Job xxxvi. 5, "Behold God is mighty, and despiseth not any, he is mighty in strength of understanding" (mind), that is, if "strength" referred to attributes of the divine mind, magnanimity, and longsuffering, the clause would be connected rather with the first, and the verse would read, "The Lord is slow to anger and great in strength, but he will &c."; see Numb. xiv. 17, 18, to which the verse bears great resemblance. The phrase "will by no means clear," or leave unpunished, is used here absolutely, as Ex. xxxiv. 7, it being readily understood who it is that He will not let go unpunished; cf. Ex. xx. 7; Joel iii. 21; Jer. xxv. 29. For "great in power" some would read the usual "great in mercy."

With *v.* 3 *b* the prophet passes to the manifestation of these attributes of Jehovah or of Jehovah in these attributes in the tempest. The passage does not seem to possess unity as a description of a single Theophany, but rather accumulates features from various manifestations of the Lord, all illustrating His power and its terrible effects in nature and on men. For similar descriptions cf. Ps. xviii. 7—15, xxix. 3—9.

hath his way in the whirlwind] i.e. He moves and passes in the whirlwind, which is not the mere wind but also all its accompaniments of cloud and darkness. (The Heb. word for "storm" is spelt exceptionally here, as Job ix. 17.) The meaning is not so much that Jehovah uses the whirlwind and storm as the vehicles of His movement, as that these commotions and terrors in nature

dust of his feet. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, 4
and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and
Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. The 5
mountains quake at him, and the hills melt; and the

are created by His Presence, of which to men they are the tokens. The splendid words "the clouds are the dust of his feet," like the others "the earth is his footstool" need to be conceived, not explained.

4. *He rebuketh the sea*] with His voice of thunder; or perhaps the effect of the tempest on the sea in rolling it back and uncovering its bed may be taken as shewing His rebuke, Ps. civ. 7—9. It is possible that the historical instances of His dividing the Red Sea and the Jordan (Ps. cxiv. 3—5) may have led to His "rebuking" the sea and rivers being regarded as a general attribute. Comp. Hab. iii. 8, "Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? Was... thy wrath against the sea?"

and maketh it dry] Ps. xviii. 15, "Then the channels of waters appeared, and the foundations of the world were laid bare, at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils." The spelling of the Heb. word, "maketh it dry," has analogies, Lam. iii. 33, 53. Cf. Ps. cvi. 9; Is. l. 2.

Bashan languisheth] Bashan, Lebanon, and Carmel were the most splendidly wooded parts of Palestine and covered with the most luxuriant vegetation, cf. Is. xxxiii. 9, xxxv. 2. Before the hot breath of Jehovah's anger they languish and wither. The description is scarcely on a line with the former "rebuketh the sea," though "drieth up all the rivers" may form the transition. It was the furious tempest that rolled back the sea, it is the hot wind and drought of the desert under which Bashan languishes and withers up. Both are operations of Jehovah. Nature is alive but not with a life of her own; all her forces are but the personal energies of Jehovah. It is His rebuke, spoken though men may not hear it, before which the sea retreats and its bed is made bare; the hot wind which withers Carmel and Lebanon is His fiery breath. Is. xl. 7, 24; Am. i. 2. For "languisheth" many scholars read a similar word "withers" to keep up the acrostical arrangement. The verb "languisheth" recurs at the end of the verse, and it may have been inserted here by mistake.

5. Verse 5 returns to describe the Theophany in the tempest, and its effects.

mountains quake at him] lit. *from him*, the effect comes from Him. It is not an earthquake that is described but the effect of the thunder and roar of the tempest. This shakes the mountains. It is not out of terror alone that the mountains tremble, it is the goings, the tread of the mighty God by which they are shaken, Mic. i. 3, 4. Hab. iii. 6, "He stood (stepped on earth), and the earth rocked (if this is the meaning of the verb: R.V. has 'measured')"; Judg. v. 4.

earth is upheaved at his presence, yea, the world, and
6 all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken

the hills melt] What the physical phenomenon is which suggests this figure is not quite clear. Possibly Judg. v. 4, 5 explains the meaning: "When thou wentest forth out of Seir,...the earth trembled, the heavens also dropped, yea, the clouds dropped water. The mountains flowed down at the presence of the LORD"—the streams rushing down the mountains on all sides seemed as if the mountains themselves had become fluid. The rendering "flowed down," Judg. v. 5, is the most natural, though others derive the form used from another root which might mean "to quake." In this case the melting of the mountains might refer to their *motion*, their undulating as if fluid. Mic. i. 3, 4, "Behold the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth (the storm-cloud trailing over the mountains). And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, as waters that are poured down a steep place." The figure of melting wax hardly means that the mountains melt under the fiery feet of Jehovah.

the earth is upheaved] The reference is to the rising and sinking motion of the earth—not its oscillation; cf. Am. ix. 5. Bickell, taking the verb from a different root, renders *becomes waste*. The last clause is a not unusual formula; cf. Ps. xxiv. 1.

6. Verse 6 draws the general conclusion from the preceding. The description, *vv.* 2—5, is one of the manifestation of the Lord on the more terrible side of His being. For though His revelation of Himself at the Exodus and later (Judg. v. 4, 5) had for its purpose the delivery of His people, this implied wrath and vengeance upon their enemies (Hab. iii. 12, 13). Hence the exclamation, "Who can stand before his indignation!" cf. Mal. iii. 2.

his fury is poured out] A common figure, particularly in Jer., e.g. vii. 20, xlii. 18, xliv. 6; cf. 2 Chron. xii. 7, xxxiv. 21, 25; and Dan. ix. 11, 27. The expression "poured out like" may mean, is poured out and acts like fire, or the idea may be that of a fiery stream; Is. xxx. 33, "the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

rocks are broken asunder] Or, *rent in pieces*. The word is used of throwing down an altar, Judg. vi. 30, beating down a tower, Judg. viii. 17, high places, city walls and cities themselves, 2 Kings xxiii. 8, xxv. 10; Jer. xxxix. 8, iv. 26. The rending of the rocks is not ascribed to the fire but to Jehovah Himself (by Him, lit. *from Him*, because of Him); but several writers have suggested *by it*. The second half of *v.* 6 continues the idea of the first half, the impossibility of standing before His anger: it is a flood of fire.

asunder by him. The LORD is good, a strong hold in the 7
day of trouble; and he knoweth them that put their trust
in him. But with an overrunning flood he will make a 8
full end of the place thereof, and will pursue his enemies
into darkness. What do ye imagine against the LORD? 9

7—15. JEHOVAH WILL MAKE AN UTTER END OF THE ENEMIES OF HIS PEOPLE.

The preceding verses have been general, speaking of the attributes of Jehovah and their manifestation, and conclude with the inference that none can stand before His wrath. Now the prophet approaches his more immediate theme, the pouring of Jehovah's anger on Nineveh. Verse 7 forms an antithesis to *v.* 8: Jehovah is the friend of His friends, *v.* 7, and the foe of His enemies, *v.* 8, of whom He will make an utter end.

7. *The LORD is good, a strong hold*] More naturally: *is good for* (as) *a strong hold*, construction as Gen. iii. 6. For the expression cf. Jer. xvi. 19. The LXX renders: *is good to those who wait on him*, which gives a better parallelism to the next clause. Cf. Ps. xxxvii. 39, "He is their strong hold in the time of trouble," virtually the same words as Heb. here.

knoweth them that put their trust in him] Ps. i. 6, "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous." Gen. xviii. 19; Am. iii. 2.

For "put their trust in him" it would be better to read "take refuge in him," thus carrying on the metaphor.

8. *an overrunning flood*] Is. viii. 8, xxviii. 15.

a full end of the place thereof] lit. *make her place* (Nineveh's) *an utter end*, i.e. completely destroy it. It must be confessed that the "her" referring to Nineveh is unprepared for by any previous mention of the city. Again the LXX has read differently, giving for "her place" *those that rise up against* him, a reading which affords an exact parallel to "his enemies" in the next clause: cf. Deut. xxxiii. 11. There is no objection to the Heb. text on the score of construction: Neh. ix. 31 has two accus. for certain, and so apparently Jer. xxx. 11; Ezek. xx. 17; compare a similar construction Is. v. 6. The remark of Buhl (*Zeitschr. für Alttest. Wiss.* 1885, p. 181, followed by Kautzsch) that a second accus. is not used after "make an end" is groundless.

will pursue...into darkness] More probably: **darkness shall pursue**. So ancient Versions as LXX, making "darkness" the subject. Is. viii. 22 is too obscure to be cited as a parallel to the R.V. rendering; and in Jer. xxiii. 12, even if "darkness" be connected with the verb the sense is rather: *in the darkness shall they be thrust down* (or, thrust at, Ps. cxviii. 13, xxxvii. 5) *and fall therein*. Job xviii. 18 has the idea: "He shall be driven from light into darkness," where the construction, however, is easier.

9. *What do ye imagine against the LORD*] Compare *v.* 11. But

he will make a full end: affliction shall not rise up the
10 second time. For though they be like tangled thorns,
and be drenched as it were in their drink, they shall be

this sense, though the natural one, does not connect well with the next clause. Possibly the meaning is, *What do ye imagine* (think) *of* the Lord? in regard to Him and His operations. The next words then explain how He is to be thought of, and what His way of operation is: He will make an utter end. Or perhaps the verb means "devise" or "plot." Cf. Hos. vii. 15.

affliction...the second time] Or, **trouble shall not rise twice.** Is the statement a threat against Jehovah's enemies or particularly Nineveh? or is it a promise to Israel? Do the words mean that as the Lord shall make an utter end of Nineveh, the trouble that now threatens her shall be once for all? or is the sense that Israel having suffered once from Assyria (Sennacherib), she shall not suffer twice? The use of the word "twice" as well as the connexion seems to favour the former sense, though perhaps the term "affliction" or trouble not unnaturally suggests the second. Comp. 1 Sam. xxvi. 8, "Let me smite him...with the spear to the earth at one stroke (one time), and I will not smite him the second time (lit. I will not repeat to him)"; 2 Sam. xx. 10. The same ambiguity arises in *v.* 12. But, following a hint from the LXX, Gunkel, Marti, and others read "He will not take vengeance on his adversaries twice," and this fits in very well.

In order to keep up the alphabetical arrangement Marti and Powis Smith are constrained to transpose the three lines of this verse, which then reads: "Affliction...time. He will make...end. What...the Lord?" As far as sense goes this is certainly no improvement. The next letter of the alphabet is supplied by inserting at this point 2 *b* "The LORD taketh vengeance...enemies."

10. Verse 10 can hardly have been handed down in its original state. It may be rendered much as R.V.: *for though* (they be like) *thorns tangled together and drenched as with their drink, they shall be consumed as stubble fully dry.* The Ninevites are compared to a tangled thorn hedge soaked with moisture and thus inaccessible to fire, yet the fire of Jehovah shall consume them as suddenly and completely as if they were the driest stubble. For the prep. *'ad* in the sense of *though, even* cf. Numb. viii. 4; 1 Sam. ii. 5; Hagg. ii. 19; Job xxv. 5; and for the sense *as with* cf. Is. i. 25 &c. Those scholars, however, who attempt to keep up the acrostic in this verse, relegate the words translated *for though* (*ki 'ad*) to the preceding verse, rendering "*for unto* complete destruction he is about to work" instead of "he will make a full end." *v.* 10 then reads "thorns tangled together...they shall be consumed." The next words "drenched as it were in their drink" might mean *wet* or *wetted like their drink.* It has been usually supposed that in the words "their drink" the prophet refers to the excess and debauchery

devoured [1]utterly as dry stubble. There is one gone forth 11
out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD, [2]that
counselleth [3]wickedness. Thus saith the LORD: Though 12
they be in full strength, and likewise many, even so shall
they be cut down, and he shall pass away. [4]Though I
have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. And now 13

[1] Or, *as stubble fully dry* [2] Or, *a wicked counsellor*
[3] Or, *worthlessness* Heb. *Belial.*
[4] Or, *So will I afflict thee, that I shall afflict &c.*

of the Assyrian court. But a witticism of this sort is altogether improbable. The text is no doubt corrupt. For "drenched as it were in their drink" the LXX gives "like tangled yew," or some such plant. The general sense of the text may be conjectured to have been, that though the Ninevites from their strong defences were as unassailable and able to inflict injury as a tangled thorn hedge, they would become the prey of the fire. See a similar comparison to a thorn hedge, Mic. vii. 4; and on the comparison of enemies or the wicked to thorns, 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7; Ezek. ii. 6.

11. *There is one gone forth*] Rather: **Did not one come forth from thee, that imagined...that counselled...?** The interrogative and negative are a rendering of a word similar to that rendered "utterly" in the preceding verse. Wellhausen is almost certainly right in transposing this word from the end of *v.* 10 to the beginning of this verse, and altering it in accordance with the sense given above. The verbs are to be rendered in the past tense, and the reference is probably to Sennacherib. The words are addressed to Nineveh.

12. The verse is very obscure. The LXX renders *Thus saith the Lord, who ruleth over many waters.* This represents a different division of the letters of the Hebrew words, the omission of one word altogether, and some alteration in others. The Syriac rendering is *Thus saith the Lord concerning the heads* (rulers?) *of many waters.* If the Hebrew text is in order, the R.V. rendering is as good as can be found. But the word "cut down" as pointed is used elsewhere only of shearing sheep or the hair of the head, and even if the figure were that of thorns as *v.* 10, seems inappropriate. If the figure were that of waters it would be still more unsuitable. The form might come however from the verb used in Ps. xc. 10 (R.V. *for it is* soon *gone* and we fly away), meaning "to hasten away." Of conjectural emendations it will suffice to mention Wellhausen's "Though the great waters (i.e. the multitudes inhabiting Nineveh, cf. ii. 8) be never so full, they shall disappear and pass away," and Marti's (followed by Powis Smith) "The days of my contention are at an end, yea, they are over and gone."

Though I have afflicted thee] In the text the words are a message

will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy
14 bonds in sunder. And the LORD hath given command-
ment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be
sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven
image and the molten image; I will make thy grave; for
15 thou art vile. Behold, upon the mountains the feet of
him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!
Keep thy feasts, O Judah, perform thy vows: for [1]the

[1] Or, the man of *worthlessness* Heb. *Belial.*

of hope to Judah, and this is the sense preferred by Keil and Marti. The marg. represents a threat to Nineveh, and this is the sense more generally accepted. For the construction cf. Exod. iv. 14; Numb. xxiii. 20.

13 seq. In *v.* 13 (acc. to text) Judah is addressed; in *v.* 14 Assyria; again *v.* 15 (Heb. ii. 1) Judah, and ii. 1 (Heb. ii. 2) Assyria; and once more *v.* 2 Judah, and *v.* 3 seq. Assyria. Such frequent interchange of persons is most unnatural. Verse 13 might be an interpolation or marginal note due to the assumption that Judah is addressed in the words in the end of the preceding verse. Ch. ii. 2 could hardly stand where it is, though it might follow ch. i. 15.

his yoke] i.e. that of Assyria. "Judah was probably tributary to Assyria through much, if not the whole, of Asshurbanipal's reign" (Driver). The form for "yoke" occurs only here, cf. Jer. xxvii. 2, xxviii. 10, 12; Ezek. xxxiv. 27; Lev. xxvi. 13; Is. lviii. 6. With "burst thy bonds in sunder" cf. Ps. ii. 3, where the words are the same; also Jer. xxx. 8.

14. Assyria is addressed.

out of the house of thy gods] The Assyrians had themselves been wont to carry off the images out of the temples of the people whom they had conquered. A divine retribution is here prophesied.

I will make thy grave] This, according to a common use of the pron., might mean: *a grave for thee*, consign thee to the grave. More naturally Syr., *I will make it thy grave*, i.e. probably, the house of thy god. Bickell, turning the phrase "for thou art vile" into a noun by some change of consonants, educes the sense: I will make thy graves to be dunghills. The word "dunghill" is Syr. and Targumic. Powis Smith reads "I will make thy grave a dishonour."

15 (Heb. ii. 1). The ancient foe of Israel is no more, and those who announce his downfall hasten over the mountains proclaiming the good tidings. Judah is bidden hold her feasts, and fulfil her vows, made in the days of her adversity. Almost the same words occur in Is. lii. 7. The phrase "perform (pay) vows" is common in the Psalms and later literature, but is found also in early prose, e.g. 2 Sam. xv. 7, 8.

the wicked one] Heb. *belial*, the wrongdoer; whether Assyria per-

wicked one shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.

He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: 2
keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily. For the LORD bringeth again 2
the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel: for the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred

sonified or the king of Assyria. Driver suggests that the writer has in mind the Assyrian tax gatherers.

pass through thee] Cf. Joel iii. 17; Zech. ix. 8.

CH. II.

1, 2. Now begins the description of the attack upon Nineveh and its fall. Verse 2, however, returns to Israel and contains a reflection on the meaning of the downfall of Nineveh—its purpose is the restoration of Israel. The following *v.* 3 continues *v.* 1, and the occurrence of *v.* 2 between them has been considered unnatural. Possibly *v.* 2 is the marginal reflection of a reader, which has fallen into the text, or it is to be placed before *v.* 1. Marti, followed by Powis Smith, collects i. 12, 13, 15, ii. 2, together as a message of salvation to Judah. Then i. 11, 14, ii. 3—13 give a description of the siege. But the order of the text need not necessarily be altered.

1. *He that dasheth in pieces*] Probably the word should be pointed so as to mean *a maul* or hammer, as Jer. li. 20; cf. Prov. xxv. 18. The foe and destroyer of Nineveh is referred to.

before thy face] Or, **against** thy face. Probably "thy," which is *fem.* in Heb. text, should be read as *masc.* Assyria is addressed.

keep the munition] i.e. the fortress or stronghold. Nineveh or Assyria is exhorted to be ready for the foe who has come up: the fort is to be kept, the way by which the enemy approaches watched and occupied, and resolute courage displayed. The "loins" are regarded as the seat of strength: contrast *v.* 10. The phrase "fortify thy power," or, *make strong thy might*, is parallel to "make thy loins strong," referring to inward resolution and not to external things, such as fortifications or the army; Am. ii. 14.

2. *the excellency of Jacob*] Rather, **the majesty**, i.e. the former glory of the kingdom. To restore this is Jehovah's purpose in the destruction of Nineveh, the redemptive meaning of that event. The term "Jacob" must be used here of Judah, while "Israel" refers to the people of the North. Driver suspects the words "as the excellency of Israel" to be a gloss, added originally upon the margin by a scribe. He thinks that if a comparison between the two kingdoms had been intended, we should have had "Judah" for "Jacob" in the first clause. But Jacob and Israel are similarly contrasted in Is. xliii. 1, xliv. 1, xlvi. 3.

the emptiers] i.e. plunderers, cf. Is. xxiv. 1, 3. The figure is the common one of the vine, cf. Jer. v. 10; Ps. lxxix. 8, 15.

3 their vine branches. The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots [1]flash with steel in the day of his preparation, and the

[1] Heb. *are with fire of steel.*

3—10. Assault and sack of the city.

The verses give a graphic, though of course ideal, picture of the attack on Nineveh and its capture. (1) Description of the hostile warriors, who bear shields and are clad in scarlet; and of the furious charging of the chariots (*vv.* 3, 4). (2) The attack on the city walls; capture of the queen and harem, and sack of the town (*vv.* 5—10). More particularly, *v.* 3 describes the hostile army as prepared for the conflict; *v.* 4 conflict outside the walls; *v.* 5 approach to the walls and assault upon them; *v.* 6 opening of the river-gates, and despair of the palace; *v.* 7 capture of the palace and its inmates; *vv.* 8—10 sack of the city.

3. Description of the hostile army "in the day of its preparation," i.e. before engaging the Ninevites. The pronoun, "his" mighty men, refers to the destroyer of Nineveh mentioned in *v.* 1.

is made red] The meaning is uncertain. It is supposed that reference is made to shields covered with copper, which flashed red in the sun (1 Macc. vi. 39). The word would more naturally suggest some practice of dyeing or anointing (Is. xxi. 5) the shields red. In Assyrian warfare the men fought in groups of two or three, one carrying the shield and the others shooting arrows or using other weapons of offence. Shields were of various kinds, sometimes of wicker work on a metal frame and covered with leather or metal plates; sometimes of more solid materials mounted with round or pointed bosses. Large standing shields set upon the ground were also in use, behind which the archers stood. Examples are given in Layard, *Nineveh*, II. 344—348, and in Billerb.-Jerem., pp. 169, 174 seq.

the valiant men are in scarlet] The reference is probably to the colour of the uniforms, which in ancient times was often red. This was the colour with the Babylonians: cf. Ezek. xxiii. 14. With the Assyrians it seems to have been blue: cf. Ezek. xxiii. 6, xxvii. 23.

flash with steel] lit. *with* (or, in) *fire of steel are the chariots.* The word rendered "steel" (*pldt*) is of uncertain meaning, and was translated "torches" by A.V. under the assumption that it was a form of the usual word (*lpdt*). Ges. conjectured "steel" on the analogy of a similar root in Arabic. The Arab. word for steel, however, is borrowed from the Persian, and is too late to be found here. Others think of an Arab. verb "to cut off," &c., and render "fire which divides itself," coruscating or flashing fire. The Arab. word means *to cut off a piece of properly* in order to bestow it upon another; or, *to cut flesh* meat, or liver *in pieces*, but has not the general sense of cut or divide, and could not express the idea of

[1]spears are shaken terribly. The chariots rage in the 4
streets, they justle one against another in the broad ways:

[1] Heb. *fir trees.*

flashes or flames of fire Altogether to be rejected is the idea founded on the word "to cut," that chariots armed with scythes are meant. In Biblical literature such chariots are first mentioned in 2 Macc. xiii. 2. They were not known in early antiquity, being referred to for the first time in connexion with the battle of Cunaxa (*Anab.* i. 7, 10, i. 8, 10). In the *Cyropaedia* (vi. 1, 30) Cyrus is said to have been the inventor of scythed chariots. The Assyrians did not employ them, nor, it may be assumed, the Medes. The unknown word here is probably a technical term, and the reference may be to the burnished plates of metal with which the chariots were mounted or mailed, and the glittering weapons hung on them. A figure of such an armed chariot is shewn in Billerb.-Jerem., p. 167.

the spears are shaken terribly] The word for *spears* is lit. "fir-trees" (so A.V.). This might possibly denote long lances or spears. But the LXX reading "horsemen" is to be preferred, the words being very similar in Heb. Or it might be rendered "chargers." The verb rendered "shaken terribly" (perhaps *bristle*) does not occur again, though the root is found in Zech. xii. 2; Ps. lx. 3 &c.; the word rendered "mufflers" in Is. iii. 19 is from the same root and should perhaps be translated "gauze veils," possibly so called from the quivering of the fine stuff. If the rendering "spears" is adopted the reference would be to the shaking or vibrating of the long lances in the hands of those who brandished them. Or, reference might be to the battering rams swung against the walls. If "horsemen" be read, the wild careering of the cavalry would be referred to.

4. Verse 3 referred to the aspect of the assailing army in the day of preparation; *v.* 4 appears to describe an actual conflict before the city.

rage in the streets] **in the outplaces**. The reference is certainly to what is taking place outside the walls, not within the town. The term "streets" often means fields (Job v. 10), or what lies outside or abroad; it is parallel to **"broad places"** next clause, i.e. open ground in front of the walled city.

A suburb or outskirt of Nineveh called *ribit Nina* (broad place of Nineveh) lay probably on the N.E. of the city, or on the east, the side on which the great road to Arbela left the city. In such places there would no doubt be forts here and there, and around these the battle would rage, for the defenders would not retreat within the walls without a conflict. Jer. xlvi. 9 also uses the word "rage" of the racing of chariots. Chariots were employed in sieges. Cf. Layard, *Nineveh*, II. 349.

the appearance of them is like torches, they run like the
5 lightnings. He remembereth his worthies: they stumble
in their march; they make haste to the wall thereof, and
6 the mantelet is prepared. The gates of the rivers are

the appearance of them is like torches] The glitter of the mailed chariots and their furious racing is compared to torches and lightnings.

5. It is not easy to say whether this verse refers to the besiegers or the besieged. As *v.* 3 referred to the preparation, and *v.* 4 to conflicts before the walls, *v.* 5 might naturally as the next step describe the assault on the wall by the besiegers. The siege actually lasted two years, but the prophet condenses the whole into a few brilliant successive scenes. The term rendered "worthies" occurs again in iii. 18, where it refers to the Assyrian nobles. If the meaning is, as is probable, the same here, the reference would be to the measures of defence taken by the Assyrian king. The expression "they make haste to the wall" might also seem more natural if the defenders were referred to; and the other expression "they stumble in their march" is more likely to be said of worn-out defenders than of an eager enemy in the act of delivering an assault. The phrase could hardly describe the pell-mell rush of a storming party towards the wall.

they stumble in their march] Their stumbling might be due to the suddenness of their call and weariness from the harassing fatigues of the defence. There is no necessity for supposing that the defenders were sunk in sloth and effeminate from debauchery.

the mantelet is prepared] The term "mantelet" (*sokek*), lit. *coverer*, is obscure in two ways: (1) it is uncertain whether it be a thing or a body of men, an engine or a party of troops, called the coverer, as another similar word is the *ambush*, i.e. the party forming an ambuscade: and (2) it is uncertain whether it belongs to the besiegers or the besieged. If the rest of the verse described the defenders, this clause would also most naturally be said of them. In this case it would be either some apparatus of defence against the assault of the enemy, or a body of men placed in some position to beat back the storming party. City walls were usually provided with turrets or battlements projecting forward over the walls, from which the besieged could observe the movements of the enemy at the foot, and hurl destructive missiles upon them. A party placed in such a position might be intended. (Figures, Billerb.-Jerem., p. 160.) On the other hand, if the *sokek* belonged to the besiegers it would probably be some engine for battering the walls. So it is taken by Driver and Powis Smith. There was great variety of battering machines. Besides the usual ram, a beam with an iron head, suspended by chains and swung against the wall, there were engines run on wheels and generally provided with two wall-breachers armed with lance-shaped heads. These rams

were not generally swung horizontally but sloping upwards so as to operate on the foundations of the projecting towers, and bring them down. (Figures in Billerb.-Jerem., p. 180 seq.; Layard, II. 367 seq.) These wheeled breaching engines were of course roofed to protect those who worked the rams. Such an engine has some resemblance to the *vinea* or mantelet; the testudo or roof of shields does not seem to have been used in eastern warfare. Moveable towers which put the assailants on a level with the defenders on the wall were also employed, Layard, II. 368 seq.

6. *The gates of the rivers are opened*] The city of Nineveh lay on the left or E. side of the Tigris, opposite the modern town of Mosul. Most of it is buried under the mounds of Kouyunjik and Nebi Yunus. The city proper was of the form of an irregular parallelogram, stretching from N.W. to S.E., the broader end being on the N. This city proper was enclosed by walls protected by moats. It was only at the N.W. point that the city touched the Tigris, from which it gradually retreated to the S.E., leaving between it and the river a considerable space of territory, though an arm of the river again approached the city at the S.W. corner of the parallelogram. Billerbeck computes the length of the north wall at 2000 metres (6561 feet), that of the south wall at 800 m., and the length of the east wall N. to S. at 5000 m., and conjectures that there was room in the city for 300,000 inhabitants. Through the city ran a mountain stream, the Choser, cutting the city into two parts and falling into the Tigris, and from this stream and other streams and canals from the hills on the N.E. was drawn the water that filled the moats as well as the water supply of the city, the Tigris being unsuited for drinking. Besides the walls of the city proper with their moats there were extensive outer defences. A wall ran along the west side of the city, touching the Tigris at either end, but leaving between the city and the river a broad bow-shaped stretch of land, probably free from buildings. An immense rampart protected the city on the east side, between which and the city walls rose various kinds of fortifications. On the N.W. a wall ran for a mile and a quarter from the Tigris to the northern point of the eastern wall, and on the S. a short wall not quite half a mile long joined the eastern and western walls. These outer walls, except that on the west, were also protected by moats. The moats did not wash the walls, but were trenches at some distance from them, and the walls could only be approached by drying the moats or throwing dams across them. The "gates of the rivers" are not city gates situated on the rivers, but rather the points in the wall where the rivers or canals enter the city. Reference to a *bab nari* (river-gate) occurs in an inscription of Sennacherib (Billerb., p. 126, note), which it is conjectured might be the point where a canal entered the city on the north-east, the course of which is now the road to Khorsabad. Such "gates" would be structures provided with sluices regulating the supply of water, and if these were opened the walls would be

7 opened, and the palace is dissolved. [1]And Huzzab is
uncovered, she is carried away, and her handmaids
[2]mourn as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their
8 [3]breasts. But Nineveh hath been [4]from of old like a pool

[1] Or, *And it is decreed; she is uncovered &c.*
[2] Or, *lead* her [3] Heb. *hearts.*
[4] Or, *from the days* that *she* hath been

undermined or the city inundated. Others suggest that the "river-gates" may be the sluices of the moats. If these were opened, however, for the purpose of running the moats dry, this step should have come earlier in the prophet's description. Whatever the opening of the river-gates means, it threw the palace into a panic and shewed that all was over. The precise conception of the prophet must remain somewhat uncertain. The attack on the city would not be made from the west nor from the Tigris, but from the north or north-east, the side of the hills.

palace is dissolved] i.e. the inmates are overwhelmed with terror and despair. Possibly the word "dissolved," though not used literally, was suggested by the previous words, "the river-gates are opened."

7. *And Huzzab*] The word is altogether obscure, and Assyriology has not been able to throw any light upon it. Reference must be to the queen, but whether she be called by her name, or whether some epithet be applied to her is uncertain. The text even may be faulty. Hitzig would read *hazzab*, "the lizard," a creature which takes refuge in holes, fancying that the queen was so called because she was detected and dragged from her hiding-place. This poor witticism need not be attributed to the prophet. There is another word *hazzab* signifying "the litter" or palanquin (Is. lxvi. 20), and in lieu of anything better one might be tempted to think that the litter might mean the woman or lady, just as in Arab. *dha'inah* means a woman's litter and then a woman. Compare the German *Frauenzimmer* = woman. Some scholars regard Huzzab as a cryptic name for Nineveh, like Rahab for Egypt, and Sheshak for Babylon. Others would make it the name of an Assyrian goddess, whose image is carried forth stripped of its adornment.

is uncovered] i.e. is stripped naked.

she is carried away] lit. "is brought up." It has been suggested to read the word as "the exalted lady" after the analogy of the Assyrian. So "Huzzab the exalted is stripped naked."

tabering upon their breasts] To "taber" is to drum or beat. Beating the breast was a gesture of grief or despair, Luke xviii. 13, xxiii. 27; people also smote upon the thigh, Jer. xxxi. 19; Ezek. xxi. 12 (Heb. xxi. 17). The moaning of mourners is often compared to the complaint of the dove, see Ezek. *Cambridge Bible*, p. 49. In Assyrian the dove is called *summalu*, the mourner or complainer.

8. *But Nineveh...a pool of water*] **And Nineveh was like a pool**

of water: yet they flee away; Stand, stand, *they cry*; but
none [1]looketh back. Take ye the spoil of silver, take the 9
spoil of gold: for there is none end of the store, the [2]glory
of all pleasant furniture. She is empty, and void, and 10
waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees smite to-
gether, and anguish is in all loins, and the faces of them
all are waxed pale. Where is the den of the lions, and the 11

[1] Or, *causeth* them *to turn* [2] Or, *wealth*

of water from her beginning, lit. *from the days she was*, during all her history. But this is strange Hebrew. It is possible that we should read (with LXX) "her waters" for "from the days she was." Render "And Nineveh, her waters were like a pool of waters, and they are running away." The comparison seems to be to the peaceful waters of a reservoir, which are suddenly irreparably lost through a breach in the banks. For "her waters" others emend to "her defenders."

yet they flee away] The vast population of Nineveh, drawn from all quarters, is compared to a mass of waters; these break asunder and flee away. For the figure of waters "fleeing" cf. Ps. civ. 7. The text is not beyond suspicion in the first clause of the verse. The prophet vividly realises the scene. Nothing will arrest the precipitate flight. The cry, Stand! is unheard, none looks back. Cf. Jer. xlvi. 21.

9. All the wealth of the city is abandoned by the inhabitants, fleeing for their life, and the scene of plunder is pictured in the exclamations of the prophet, Spoil the silver!

glory of all pleasant furniture] **wealth of all precious vessels**, but the term vessels means virtually "articles." Jewels, rich apparel, costly vessels, and whatever men think precious would be found in the rich capital in abundance (Zech. xiv. 14). The enormous riches of Nineveh are frequently alluded to in the inscriptions; the treasures brought home by Assurbanipal's army after the capture of Thebes or No (ch. iii. 8) were fabulous.

10. In a series of exclamations the prophet depicts the desolation of the city and the paralysis and helplessness of those remaining in it; Is. xiii. 7, xxi. 3; Josh. vii. 5. The paronomasia in the first words, *emptiness and voidness and waste!* cannot be reproduced. Perhaps "waste and bewasted and devastated" is as near as we can get. Cf. Is. xxiv. 1, xxix. 2; Ezek. xxxiii. 29; Zeph. i. 15.

the heart melteth, and the knees smite together] Cf. Josh. vii. 5; Is. xiii. 7, xxxv. 3; Dan. v. 6.

the faces of them all are waxed pale] lit. "have withdrawn their colour." The same curious expression occurs in Joel ii. 6. Comp. the phrase of Jer. xxx. 6, "are turned to paleness (greenness)."

feeding place of the young lions, where the lion [1]*and* the lioness walked, the lion's whelp, and none made them
12 afraid? The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his caves with
13 prey, and his dens with ravin. Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.

[1] Or, even *the old lion*

11—13. THE PROPHET'S EXULTATION OVER THE DOWNFALL OF NINEVEH.

11. *Where is the den*] The Assyrians are likened to a lion because of their strength and cruelty. They filled their city with plunder as a lion fills his den.

where the lion and *the lioness walked*] The absence of the copula makes the phrase a little strange. A very slight alteration gives the rendering "where the lion went to enter in." The LXX has "where the lion went for the lion's cub to enter."

12. *The lion did tear*] Perhaps, **the lion, which did tear,** carrying on previous verse.

with ravin] i.e. torn carcases. The word is an archaism for "plunder." For the verb cf. Gen. xlix. 27.

13. *Behold, I am against thee*] For the phrase announcing a punishment from God cf. Jer. xxi. 13, xxiii. 30, l. 31 &c., and in Ezekiel, xiii. 8 &c.

her chariots in the smoke] **in smoke**, i.e. so that they go up in smoke. For "her chariots" the LXX and Syr. read *thy multitude* or *abundance* (*rubbēk* for *rikba*). One might even suggest "thy lair" (*ribçēk*). The pronoun "thy" is more natural than "her," though changes in person are very common, e.g. iii. 9.

voice of thy messengers] i.e. emissaries, exacting tribute or compelling submission, 2 Kings xviii. 17, 19, xix. 9, 23. The form of the word is anomalous.

CH. III. RENEWED THREAT AGAINST NINEVEH.

(1) The bloody city, full of ravin and prey, shall be stormed and sacked. Brilliant picture of the assailing cavalry and chariots (*vv.* 1—3). (2) This retribution shall fall on her because of her fornications and sorceries with which she drugged the nations. She shall be exposed like a harlot before the eyes of the peoples (*vv.* 4—7). (3) Can she look for a better fate than that of No-amon, which also had the waters for a rampart? (*vv.* 8—11). (4) Her defences are broken through, her outworks have fallen, let her

Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and rapine; 3
the prey departeth not. The noise of the whip, and the 2
noise of the rattling of wheels; and pransing horses, and
jumping chariots; the horseman [1]mounting, and the flash- 3

[1] Or, *charging*

prepare for the siege (*vv.* 12—14). (5) She is fallen; the merchants that crowded her marts and her people have flown away like a swarm of locusts when the sun is hot. In hatred and disdain men clap their hands over her ruin, for her evil has gone out unto all the world (*vv.* 15—19).

1. *Woe to*] Rather *Oh!* the word *hôi* being an exclamation and not a threat: cf. Habak. ii. 9, 12, 15.

the bloody city] Ezek. xxiv. 9. In ancient states the capital was virtually the kingdom, and to Nineveh are here ascribed all the characteristics of the Assyrian monarchy. The cruelties perpetrated by the Assyrians were shocking. Captive princes who had offered resistance in defence of their country were shut up in cages and exposed to the gaze of the populace; the heads of those already executed were hung round the necks of those still living; and others were flayed alive. The Assyrians appear to have been the most ruthless people of antiquity. See the cut representing impaled captives, Layard, *Nineveh*, II. 369, and Tiele's chap. on the revolt of Shamash-shum-ukin, or the cuts in Handcock, *Latest Light on Bible Lands*, pp. 145, 166; comp. also Sayce, *Assyria; its princes* &c. p. 127 ff. and Powis Smith's note *ad loc.* in *I. C. C.* On the other hand they were not incapable of acts of magnanimity, an example of which was Assurbanipal's pardon of the rebellious Egyptian princes whom his father Esarhaddon had raised to the throne. See his own words, Winckler, *Altorient. Untersuch.* I. pp. 104, 105.

full of lies and rapine] Rapine means "rending" or tearing in pieces (Ps. vii. 2), the figure of the lion (ch. ii. 11) being perhaps still retained, while "lies" rather deserts the figure, and refers to the false and overreaching statecraft of Nineveh (ch. iii. 4), though possibly the subtlety of the wild beast might be alluded to.

the prey departeth not] "Prey" may be less the thing caught than the act or habit of catching—this prey taking is unceasing; cf. Jer. xvii. 8 last clause.

2, 3. Graphic description of the attack on Nineveh. Verse 2 describes rather what is heard when the onset commences: cracking whips and prancing horsemen and rattling wheels; and *v.* 3 what is seen: charging horsemen, and flashing swords, and glittering spears. On the whip, Layard, II. 356.

jumping chariots] i.e. bounding either from their excessive speed, or from the obstacles which they meet in the uneven ground before the city.

3. *the horseman mounting*] Rather, **charging**, the verb being

ing sword, and the glittering spear; and a multitude of slain, and a great heap of carcases: and there is none end
4 of the corpses; they stumble upon their corpses: because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witch-

causative, "making to go up," cf. Jer. li. 27. In Jer. xlvi. 9 the simple verb is used of the horse (*come up*).

stumble upon their corpses] The multitude of slain and the endless corpses are those of the Ninevites, over which the victorious assailants stumble. The first half of the verse describes the charge, the second half the field when the mêlée is over. Jer. xlvi. 12.

4—7. Moral reason of Nineveh's downfall.

Verses 4—7 give the explanation of this overwhelming disaster.

4. *multitude of the whoredoms*] The term "whoredom" when used of Israel meant, first, infidelity to Jehovah, God of Israel, by serving other gods; then it was applied to alliances and political intercourse with other nations, partly because such trust in other nations betrayed distrust of Jehovah and falsehood to Him, and partly because the political influence of powerful states like Assyria and Babylon was naturally followed by an invasion of their customs and religious ideas, as was seen in the decline of the kingdom of Judah. Here, however, as applied to Nineveh the term suggests rather the fatal attraction which led weaker states to ruin.

the well favoured harlot] "Well favoured" means beautiful, though the phrase has perhaps ceased to be usual in common language; in the northern dialect "weel fa'art" is still common for good-looking. The reference perhaps is less to the splendour and riches of the imperial city, than to the dazzling prestige of the empire, which fascinated weaker states and rulers, as for example in the case of Ahaz.

mistress of witchcrafts] i.e. that practiseth sorceries. Reference is to the arts of statecraft, the influences used upon the nations, which act on them like the charms and incantations and drugs of the sorceress. The word "mistress of" corresponds to that rendered "full of" (wrath) in i. 2, and may have the same sense here.

that selleth nations] The expression to sell, viz. into bondage, appears used in a general sense, to deliver over, i.e. to destruction, as Esth. vii. 4; cf. Is. l. 1, lii. 3. The common Arab. verb to which Hitzig appeals, *to use guile, craft, to beguile*, is not a trans. verb but requires a prep. after it, and in any case its use is improbable.

and families] i.e. *peoples*, as Am. iii. 1, 2, "the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt." Cf. Jer. i. 15.

crafts. Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of 5
hosts, and I will discover thy skirts [1]upon thy face; and
I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms
thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, 6
and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock.
And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon 7
thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste:
who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters
for thee? Art thou better than No-amon, that was situate 8

[1] Or, *before*

5. *discover thy skirts*] Or, *uncover*. The word is an archaism, meaning to remove that which forms a covering, viz. the skirts; the effect is stated in the next clause. Cf. Jer. xiii. 22, 26; Ezek. xvi. 37, 39; Mic. i. 11; Hab. ii. 15. Reference is probably to the practice of exposing the harlot or adulteress. Ezek. xvi. 37—41 (cf. *Cambridge Bible*).

6. *make thee vile*] Cf. Jer. xiv. 21, "*disgrace* not the throne of thy glory!" Deut. xxxii. 15; Mic. vii. 6. The idea that the word originally meant *to cast corpses upon*, seems baseless.

a gazingstock] Cf. Ezek. xxviii. 17, 18; Matt. i. 19; 1 Cor. iv. 9. Driver and others compare the inscription of Mesha on the Moabite Stone, "And I slew all the people from the city, a gazingstock unto Chemosh and unto Moab."

7. *flee from thee*] In terror at her judgement.

whence shall I seek comforters] The words imply that none will be found to pity her, as Jer. xv. 5; Is. li. 19.

8—11. SHOULD NINEVEH EXPECT A HAPPIER FATE THAN NO-AMON?

8. *Art thou better*] Most naturally: **Shall it be** (go) **better with thee?** shalt thou have a better fate? The sense proposed by others, *Art thou better placed?* is also suitable to the connexion, but the form of the verb is against it.

No-amon] lit. "No of Amon," i.e. No whose tutelary god was Amon. From the description of the city as one whose rampart was the sea, some have supposed that No was a city of the Delta, but there can be no reasonable doubt that the city referred to is Thebes, situated about 440 miles S. of Memphis and 140 miles N. of the first cataract. It was of old the most famous city in Egypt, and as the capital during the 18th and 19th dynasties (B.C. 1580—1205) it was adorned with the most magnificent monuments, whose remains are even now the wonder of the world. The Nile here broadens out to about half a mile in width, but at low water it is divided into four channels by mud banks which lie just

among the [1]rivers, that had the waters round about her;
whose rampart was [2]the sea, *and* her wall [3]was of the sea?
9 Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite;
10 Put and Lubim were thy helpers. Yet was she carried

[1] Or, *canals* [2] That is, the Nile.
[3] Some ancient versions have, *was the waters*.

opposite the city. Thebes itself lay on the east bank, but on the opposite side (now the suburb of Kurna) there was an immense necropolis with a long row of temples in front, and thousands of tombs behind, excavated out of the rocky sides of the hills. Thebes itself is represented by the ruins of Luxor and Karnak. The city is mentioned again as No in Ezek. xxx. 14 16 (where the LXX identifies it with Diospolis = Thebes), and as Amon No in Jer. xlvi. 25. In the present passage the LXX gives no help, while the Vg. renders "Alexandria of the peoples." In Homer it is celebrated as "Thebes of the hundred gates" (*Il.* ix. 381).

among the rivers] **on the Nile streams**. The Nile is actually broken up by the mud banks mentioned above, and apparently Nahum, though he can hardly have visited the city, had heard of its situation. Or the plural may possibly be the so-called plural of majesty, i.e. "the great stream."

whose rampart was the sea] i.e. the Nile. A large river or any mass of water is called "sea." Cf. Is. xix. 5; Job xiv. 11 (of the Nile), and Jer. li. 36 (of the Euphrates). So *bahr* in Arabic.

her wall was of the sea] A slight change in pointing gives, *and waters were her wall*. So LXX. But the description is not strictly accurate, for Thebes does not appear to have been surrounded by water, although some writers have postulated the existence of great moats after the example of Nineveh.

9. *Ethiopia and Egypt*] Heb. **Cush** and Egypt. At the time of the capture of Thebes Egypt and Cush, the country south of Upper Egypt, were virtually one, as the 25th or Ethiopian dynasty were on the throne (B.C. 712—663), with No or Thebes as their capital. Cf. Jer. xlvi. 9.

and it was infinite] A favourite phrase of the prophet, ii. 9, iii. 3, 9; cf. Is. ii. 7.

Put and Lubim] In Gen. x. 6 Put is the third son of Ham. The name occurs again among the mercenaries of Tyre in Ezek. xxvii. 10, and of Egypt in Ezek. xxx. 5, Jer. xlvi. 9. In Ezek. xxxviii. 5 it appears among the followers of Gog, and in Is. lxvi. 19 (where Put should probably be read for Pul) it is associated with Lud and Tarshish. In the LXX Put is sometimes rendered by "Lybians." Its locality is generally identified with the Punt of the Egyptian inscriptions, i.e. the Somali coast of the Red Sea. But the country

away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains. Thou also shalt be drunken, 11 thou shalt be hid; thou also shalt seek [1]a strong hold

[1] Or, *a defence against*

evidently furnished numbers of mercenary troops, and the term might possibly have been applied to any black mercenary troops, as "Carian" came to denote "mercenary" in Asia Minor. The Lubim are probably to be identified with the Lehabim of Gen. x. 13.

thy helpers] The Versions have "*her* helpers."

10. *she went into captivity*] Compare Assurbanipal's account: "the entire city...my hands captured—silver, gold, precious stones, the contents of his palace, all that there was: parti-coloured raiment, cloth, horses, and people, male and female" (Powis Smith).

children...were dashed in pieces] A barbarous practice in ancient warfare; the children were taken hold of and their heads dashed against the wall or stones. The term used appears technical, 2 Kings viii. 12; Is. xiii. 16; Hos. xiii. 16 (Heb. xiv. 1); cf. however the two passages, Is. xiii. 18; Hos. x. 14. The object of this savage act was to exterminate the whole population with which war was waged; a similar practice was to rip up the women with child, Am. i. 13; Hos. xiii. 16.

cast lots for her honourable men] Lots were cast for the nobles who were taken as captives. Joel iii. 3; Obad. 11.

11. *shalt be drunken*] Drunkenness is a figure for the stupefaction caused by calamity. Cf. Is. li. 17—23, "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the bowl of the cup of staggering...Hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine." Similarly Hab. ii. 15, 16; Jer. xxv. 15 seq. Comp. Jer. xxv. 17, 18, 27; Ezek. xxiii. 33; Obad. 16.

thou shalt be hid] **thou shalt faint**, or, **swoon**, lit. *be shrouded* (in darkness). Compare the Arabic expression *'ušiya 'alaihi*—"a covering came over him," i.e. he swooned. Comp. the more usual word, Is. li. 20; Am. viii. 13; Lam. ii. 19.

The destruction of Thebes here alluded to was effected by Assurbanipal about B.C. 661. The Egyptian king of the day was Urdamanî, who had succeeded Tirhaka. Details are given in the Inscriptions; see Schrader, ii. pp. 149—152; Winckler, *Altorient. Untersuch.* I. p. 105 (Essay on "The Sargonides and Egypt"). For the bearing of the reference on date of the prophecy, see Introd., p. 5 f.

12 because of the enemy. All thy fortresses shall be *like* fig
trees with the firstripe figs: if they be shaken, they fall
13 into the mouth of the eater. Behold, thy people in the
midst of thee are women; the gates of thy land are set
wide open unto thine enemies: the fire hath devoured
14 thy bars. Draw thee water for the siege, strengthen thy
fortresses: go into the clay, and tread the mortar, [1]make
15 strong the brickkiln. There shall the fire devour thee; the

[1] Or, *lay hold of the brickmould*

12—15. HER OUTER DEFENCES FALLEN, NINEVEH MUST PREPARE FOR THE SIEGE.

12. *thy fortresses*] The fortresses may be either the outer defences of the city, or the fortresses in the country, meant to guard the frontier or block the enemy's progress towards the capital. They are like ripe figs; if the tree be shaken, they fall into the mouth. Cf. Hab. i. 10; 2 Kings iii. 25; Mic. v. 5. On Nineveh's preliminary defences, cf. Billerb.-Jer., p. 127 seq. For *shall be* we should read *are*. The prophet is conjuring up the scene before his mind.

13. Dismay and paralysis seize the Assyrians before the enemy. The comparison to "women" is common, Is. xix. 16; Jer. xlix. 22, l. 37, li. 30; also in the Assyr. inscriptions.

in the midst of thee] i.e. throughout the land, not merely in the city of Nineveh.

gates of thy land are set wide open] The gates of the land are the passes or defiles, or the ways guarded by defences through which entrance is obtained into the country, or advance made towards the capital. Compare the famous Cilician Gates.

thy bars] The term may be used metaphorically to describe the forts themselves; or literally, the bars of the gates of such defences. When the gates are burnt the forts fall. Marti and Powis Smith transpose the second and third clauses of this verse, and obtain a slightly better connexion.

14. All the defences of the country up to the capital are fallen before the enemy. Nineveh must prepare for the siege.

Draw thee water for the siege] Sennacherib had supplied Nineveh with water from mountain torrents by an aqueduct, and had constructed a system of waterworks. Nahum bids the city see to this supply in view of the siege. Compare the precaution of Ahaz in Is. vii. 3. This seems better than Billerbeck's suggestion that boiling water is to be got ready to pour on the besiegers.

make strong the brickkiln] Rather, as marg., **lay hold of the brickmould**. The words explain the previous phrases "go into the clay" &c. The exhortation is to prepare bricks to strengthen the walls, make new works, or repair the breaches. The great double

sword shall cut thee off, it shall devour thee like the cankerworm: make thyself many as the cankerworm, make thyself many as the locust. Thou hast multiplied 16
thy merchants above the stars of heaven: the canker-
worm [1]spoileth, and flieth away. Thy crowned are as the 17

[1] Or, *spreadeth himself*

outer rampart on the east of the city appears to have been partly of brick and partly of earth; the walls of the city itself were formed partly at least of blocks of limestone (mussel chalk). Comp. Layard, *Nineveh*, II. 275.

15. *There*] i.e. in the midst of her strong walls and towers. The "fire" is said of the city, the "sword" of the inhabitants. The remains of Nineveh shew that the city was destroyed by fire.

like the cankerworm] Perhaps: **young locust**, before it attains ability to fly (*v.* 16), as distinguished from "locust" in the end of the verse. In any case the word is a name for locust, whatever "cankerworm" may mean, Joel i. 4; Ps. cv. 34. The phrase "the sword shall consume thee as the young locust" may mean "in numbers as great as young locusts (Jer. li. 14)—many as the young locust though thou art." The comparison is peculiar, though the idea is amplified in the next clause. But more probably there is a reference to the use of fire in exterminating hordes of locusts. The text is possibly in disorder.

make thyself many] The imperatives can only be concessive—many as the young locusts shouldst thou make thyself. The first "make thyself many" is *masc.* and the second *fem.*, which is scarcely possible in grammar. Probably the fem. form should be read in both cases. The LXX read the last part of the verse in a shorter form, though the last clause of *v.* 16 seems to require it in some shape. The words are connected with *v.* 16.

16. *Thou hast multiplied*] Wellhausen proposes to carry on the imperative "Multiply thy merchants": and this improves the sense. For "merchants" Kuenen proposed to read "mercenaries."

spoileth] lit. *strips off*, i.e. probably its skin or shard, which confines its wings. If this be the sense, Tennyson's lines finely express it—

> To-day I saw the dragon-fly
> Come from the wells where he did lie.
>
> An inner impulse rent the vail
> Of his old husk; from head to tail
> Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.
>
> He dried his wings: like gauze they grew;
> Through crofts and pastures wet with dew,
> A living flash of light he flew.

The general idea of the comparison seems to be the swiftness with which the crowds that inhabit Nineveh disappear.

locusts, and thy [1]marshals as the swarms of grasshoppers,
which camp in the [2]hedges in the cold day, but when the
sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known
18 where they are. Thy shepherds slumber, O king of
Assyria: thy worthies are at rest: thy people are scattered
upon the mountains, and there is none to gather them.
19 There is no assuaging of thy hurt; thy wound is grievous:

[1] Or, *scribes* [2] Or, *walls*

17. The idea at the end of *v.* 16 is amplified.

Thy crowned] The word is unknown. It is probably an Assyrian term, and is conjectured to mean *nobles*, or something similar. If the word is Hebrew, it may mean either "adorned with a head-band" (alluding to some distinctive official dress), or "separated," "consecrated."

and thy marshals] The word employed is *taphsar* (*tiphsar*, Jer. li. 27), which appears to be the Assyr. *dupsarru*, i.e. tablet writer, scribe, a term most likely used in a wider sense to denote high officials. So in Heb. the scribe appears sometimes as a military officer. Cf. Judg. v. 14; 2 Kings xxv. 19. See Schrader, i. 141, ii. 118; Delitzsch, *Paradies*, p. 142. The identification of the word with the Assyr. title is due to Lenormant.

the swarms of grasshoppers] The term means "locusts," Am. vii. 1. So in Arab. e.g. Carmina Hudhail. 139. 7. The word appears to be here written twice (possibly by mistake), which A.V. has sought to express by "great" and R.V. by "swarms of."

when the sun ariseth they flee away] Locusts become torpid with the cold; under the warmth of the sun they revive and take flight.

where they are] Duhm and Powis Smith alter one consonant and transfer to the beginning of the next verse. "How do thy shepherds slumber!" They thus obtain an elegiac rhythm.

18. *Thy shepherds slumber*] i.e. the leaders and rulers. It is most suitable to the connexion to take *slumber* (which is the ordinary word for sleep) to mean, "are sunk in death"; cf. Ps. xiii. 3, "Lest I sleep the sleep of death." Ps. lxxvi. 5; Jer. li. 39, 57.

are at rest] The text reads *dwell*, but change of one letter gives *lie down*, i e. sleep; 1 Kings i. 21; Is. xiv. 18. So LXX, followed by Wellhausen. The leaders are fallen, and the people scattered upon the mountains. This is more natural than to suppose that "slumber" and "sleep" refer to slothful inactivity on the part of the Assyrian leaders. Nineveh was defended for two years against the Medes, though Nahum does not seem to anticipate a lengthy resistance.

scattered upon the mountains] This keeps up the simile of the sheep. Cf. 1 Kings xxii. 17.

19. *no assuaging of thy hurt*] lit. *thy breach*, a favourite word of

all that hear the bruit of thee clap the hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?

Jeremiah, e.g. vi. 14, viii. 11, 21, "*the hurt* of the daughter of my people." The hurt of Nineveh is incurable (Jer. xxx. 12), her ruin shall be eternal.

the bruit of thee] i.e. the *report* of thy downfall. The word is an archaism from the French *bruit* = "noise." It occurs again in the A.V. of Jer. x. 22.

clap the hands] A gesture of illwill and malevolent gladness. Cf. Ezek. xxv. 6.

upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed] Assyria has been the foe and the scourge of the human race.

Ὀψὲ θεῶν ἀλέουσι μύλοι, ἀλέουσι δὲ λεπτά.

Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small.

HABAKKUK

INTRODUCTION

§ 1. The Prophet.

Beyond his name, which does not occur again, nothing is known of the prophet. The word Ḥabaḳḳuḳ probably means "embrace," or, if its doubly intensive form be taken into account, "ardent embrace." The Greek form of the name, Hambakoum, would rather suggest the pronunciation Habbakuk. It is possible that the abstract "embrace" was used for object of embrace, darling or delight, a natural enough name for a child (2 Kings iv. 16[1]). So Jerome explains, "He is called 'embrace' either because of his love to the Lord, or because he wrestles with God." In Assyrian *ḫambaḳūḳu* is said to be the name of a plant.

The superscription to the Codex Chisianus of the LXX in the Book of Bel and the Dragon states that the story was taken "From the prophecy of Hambakoum, son of Jesus, of the tribe of Levi." Whether such an Apocryphal prophecy ever existed may be doubtful. The Levitical origin of the prophet is most likely an inference from the musical notes to ch. iii., particularly the last words of the chapter "on my stringed instruments" (though the LXX reads *his* for *my*). According to Ps. Epiphanius, *De Vitis Prophetarum*, Habakkuk belonged to Bethzochar or Bethzachar (which is probably Bethzacharias in the south of Judah, 1 Macc. vi. 32; Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* i. 1, 5), of the tribe of Simeon. It is said that when Jerusalem fell in 586 he fled to Ostracine (now Straki) on the borders of Egypt, but returned to his native place on the withdrawal of the Chaldeans (cf. Jer. xl. 11, 12), and died two years before the return of the exiles from Babylon. His tomb was pointed out in Keilah. The story of

[1] A Rabbinic tradition, founded on this verse, makes Habakkuk the son of the Shunammite woman, whom Elisha restored to life.

Bel and the Dragon (*v.* 33 seq.) says: "Now there was in Jewry the prophet Habakkuk, who had made pottage, and had broken bread into a bowl, and was going into the field, for to bring it to the reapers. But the angel of the Lord said unto Habakkuk, Go carry the dinner that thou hast into Babylon unto Daniel, in the lions' den....Then the angel of the Lord took him by the crown, and lifted him up by the hair of the head, and with the blast of his breath set him in Babylon over the den." This took place after Babylon had fallen, when Cyrus was king. It may be questioned if any grain of truth can be found among these fables. Both traditions extend the lifetime of Habakkuk to about the downfall of Babylon before Cyrus (B.C. 538), and it would be in conformity with the sense of the traditions to infer that Habakkuk's prophetic message could not have been delivered long before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586. The internal evidence of the prophecy itself points to the same conclusion.

Peiser (*Der Prophet Habakuk* in *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, 1903) supposes that Habakkuk was a prince of the royal family of Judah, perhaps a grandson or a son of Manasseh, who was sent to Nineveh in childhood as a hostage, and grew up there. In Nineveh he experienced in B.C. 625 an unsuccessful attack of the Chaldees, and as the menace drew nearer and nearer, he saw in it the intervention of God to help His people and His anointed (by which Habakkuk understood himself): cf. iii. 13. The idea of the captivity of the author is derived by Peiser from the LXX reading of iii. 16 ("the people of my sojourning" for "the people which invadeth him in troops").

§ 2. The Prophecy.

There are very great difficulties connected with the exposition of the prophecy[1]. First, it is not clear whether ch. i. 1—4 refer to internal evil and wrong on the part of Israelites to each other, or to acts of violence and oppression committed upon Israel by a conqueror from without. And secondly,

[1] This section is left substantially as Dr Davidson wrote it, but some other views are mentioned on p. 53 ff.

the Chaldeans are referred to in ch. i. 5—11 in a way not quite easy to understand, *vv.* 5, 6 seeming to say that they are about to be raised up, while *vv.* 7—11 appear to describe them and their operations in war as if they were already familiar. If they are referred to in ch. i. 12—17, as is natural to conclude from the connexion, the prophet's acquaintance with them is if possible more evident, and the words in ch. ii. 17 "the violence done to Lebanon shall cover thee" plainly imply that their depredations had already extended to Palestine.

i. Ch. i. 2—4 may be understood as a complaint regarding internal wrong and injustice in Israel, in the manner of all the ancient prophets. This is the most natural sense of the verses and of the words used in them (see notes). On this view the progress of thought would be the following: (1) the prophet complains that his outcries against the evil, the injustice and lawlessness in Judah remain unheard by Jehovah, who disregards the evil. (2) In answer to his complaint the rise of the Chaldeans is announced. The fierceness of the people is described—a bitter and hasty nation; the lightning-like movements of their cavalry; their contempt of all resistance; and finally their impious deifying of their own might (*vv.* 5—7). (3) But the wrongdoing of the Chaldean is more unbearable than the evil it was meant to punish. The Chaldean is the scourge of mankind. The moral problem before the prophet—how God can silently look upon wrong and inhumanity—is not eased but intensified. In ch. i. 2—4 he asked how Jehovah could endure evil in Israel; now he has to ask how His pure eyes can behold it upon the stage of the world, and in a degree infinitely aggravated. The character of the Chaldeans fills his mind, their pride and selfishness, their brutal inhumanity which drags all nations into their net like fishes, and heaps men together like creeping things, their deifying their own strength, and he asks in despair if God will permit all this to go on for ever (i. 12—17). (4) Baffled before the obscurities and anomalies of God's government the prophet betakes himself to his watch-tower to look forth if God will vouchsafe an answer to his "plea." The answer comes in the shape of a moral

distinction: "his soul is not upright in him, but the righteous shall live in his faithfulness." The different characters of the Chaldean and the righteous carry in them their different destinies. The moral distinction involves its final verification in events, though this may not come at once (ii. 1—5). It is, however, certain; and the downfall of the Chaldean is predicted in a series of woes so instinct with moral feeling that not only men (*vv.* 6—8), but inanimate things (*v.* 11), are endowed with a conscience that rises against the barbarous inhumanity of the oppressor (*vv.* 6—20).

On this view it is plain that when the prophet writes, the Chaldeans are already long on the stage of history, and well known in western Asia and even in Palestine. This indeed is plain on any hypothesis if ch. i., ii. form a unity, as the remarks in the beginning of this section shew. Therefore ch. i. 5—11 is not a *prophecy* of the raising up of the Chaldeans except in form. It is a reference to the past, an explanation merely of their presence and meaning as instruments of Jehovah. The real subject of the prophet's book is the destruction of the Chaldean (ch. ii.). Ch. i. (or at least ch. i. 2—11) is preliminary, and has the dramatic form of a dialogue between the prophet and Jehovah. It is a discussion or exhibition of principles, the first draft of questionings that at a later time often found expression. First the sin of Israel comes under review, and God is asked how long He will refrain from punishing it. Then in reply God is represented as pointing to the Chaldeans, whom He is raising up as His instruments for the punishment of Israel.

In these two points the prophet reads his people's history as all the prophets do. And the pre-exilic prophets do not usually, except in glimpses, see further. To them the Chaldeans were so much the instruments of Jehovah in chastising the sins of Israel, that their own excesses were little attended to. The evil in Israel seemed so flagrant, that the cruelties of the conquerors appeared only just punishment of it. This is the view of Jeremiah, and particularly of Ezekiel. It is only later, during the Exile, and in particular toward the end of it, as in Is. xiii., xiv., xxi. 1—10, xl. seq., that the excesses of the Chaldeans are viewed as demanding God's

vengeance (Is. xlvii.). But thirdly, already this view is prominent in Habakkuk. It is not the mere occurrence of a denunciation of the Chaldeans that is surprising, it is the almost entire devotion of the prophecy to it in the manner of writers of a later time. Pre-exilic prophets predict the downfall of Babylon, e.g. Jer. li. 59—64, and in other places. It is also tacitly assumed by Ezekiel when he promises restoration to Egypt and Israel after forty years. And a similar conception of providence appears in Isaiah, who prophesies the destruction of the Assyrian when God's work by him shall be accomplished (Is. viii. 9, 10, x., xiv. 24, xvii. 12, xviii. 4). But in all these prophets it is the sin of Israel and its chastisement that occupy the foreground, while the destruction of the oppressor is seen only as the distant culmination of God's providential rule of the world in the interests of His kingdom. In Habakkuk on the contrary the excesses and violence of the oppressor occupy nearly the whole field of the prophet's vision. This could hardly be if he was only predicting the rise of the Chaldeans. Their barbarities were familiar. And the thought rises in the prophet's mind that though Israel might be sinful, the instrument used to chastise them was even more the foe of God, as he was the scourge of mankind. Such thoughts could not arise early in the Chaldean period, hardly, one would think, before the deportation of the people under Jehoiachin in 597. The vision of the prophet in ch. ii. is the answer to these reflections. It is to be noticed that the relief promised is not represented as going to be immediate: the vision may tarry and must be waited for (ii. 3). Jeremiah had predicted that the Chaldean supremacy would last two generations. The problem here raised for the first time by Habakkuk continued to oppress the minds of pious Israelites all down the people's history. It is the problem of Job and of many Psalms; and when the Romans destroyed the Temple and nation the mystery appeared only deeper than before: cf. 2 Esdras iii. 29—31, "Are the deeds of Babylon better than those of Sion? Or is there any other nation that knoweth thee beside Israel?" Cf. Apoc. of Baruch xi. 2, 3.

ii. Others have thought that the construction of the

book just stated has something artificial in it. To regard the prophet's complaints in i. 2—4 as not strictly real but only a method of stating one of the terms of a problem, viz. Israel's sinfulness, seems rather unnatural. And similarly to take the announcement of the rise of the Chaldeans, and the description of their prowess in war, as only a method of stating the second term of the problem, viz. that the Chaldean invasion is the chastisement of Israel's sin, appears to put a strain upon the natural sense. To many expositors ch. i. 2—4 seem rather to refer to oppressions suffered by Israel from an external foe, presumably the Chaldeans. But if i. 2—4 already describe the oppressive acts of the Chaldeans it is obvious that *vv.* 5—11, which speak of raising them up, are out of place. Hence some scholars have proposed to put these verses before *vv.* 2—4[1], while others would remove them altogether, regarding them as a fragment of some prophecy of the rise of the Chaldeans by another prophet, which has accidentally drifted into its present awkward place[2]. The proposal to read *vv.* 5—11 before *vv.* 2—4 will not commend itself, while the removal of *vv.* 5—11 from the prophecy altogether rather cuts the knot than looses it.

iii. An entirely different and very interesting way of reading the prophecy has been suggested by Prof. Budde[3]. This scholar agrees with the writers just named in regarding ch. i. 2—4 as descriptive of oppressions suffered by Israel from an external foe. He therefore also considers *vv.* 5—11 to be out of place; the order of ch. i. is *vv.* 2—4, 12—17. In ch. i. the Chaldean has no place. It is not he that is the oppressor of Israel, but another—the Assyrian. The prophecy predicts the destruction of the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans are God's instruments who are to be raised up for this purpose. The passage ch. i. 5—11 is authentic, but has been misplaced. Its right position is after ch. ii. 4.

In the way of this attractive hypothesis there are rather serious difficulties, some of which may be mentioned.

[1] Giesebrecht, *Beiträge zur Jesaiakritik*, p. 197 (1890).

[2] Wellhausen, *Skizzen*, v. Other earlier solutions of the difficulty are noticed by Kuenen, *Onderz.* § 76.

[3] *Stud. u. Krit.* 1893, Heft 2; *Expositor*, May, 1895.

(1) The transposition of *vv.* 5—11 from their true place after ch. ii. 4 into ch. i. is difficult to account for. Budde offers a very ingenious explanation. In the original prophecy of Habakkuk the Chaldeans were represented as the destroyers of Assyria and the liberators of Israel. This *rôle* of redeemers of Israel was so little verified in history that at a later time it appeared incredible that such an idea could ever have been expressed. And in the process of editing the book an effort was made to remove so strange a mistake. The part played by the Chaldean was changed. Instead of the liberator of Israel he was made the oppressor, and instead of the destroyer of another he became himself the one to be destroyed. And a prophecy that really referred to the Assyrian was henceforth read as applying to the Chaldean. Such an alteration would not be made earlier than 538, when the Babylonian empire fell before Cyrus.

This is possible; if it be true, criticism is not without its romance.

(2) It is strange that in a prophecy of two chapters against the Assyrian his name should nowhere occur. The suggestion that the name Asshur possibly lies concealed in the word "and offend[1]" (i. 11) is little probable, for though the passage be difficult, a reference to Assyria could hardly find place.

(3) To the objection that in i. 5—11 the Chaldeans and their methods of warfare appear well known the author replies that, so far from this being true, the description of the Chaldean is quite fantastic and imaginative, and similar to Isaiah's picture of the Assyrians before they became known, Is. v. 26—30. This is not the impression which i. 5—11 leaves on other minds; the description appears quite as realistic as that in *vv.* 12—17, supposed to refer to the Assyrians. Both passages certainly have something singular about them. On the ordinary view that i. 5—11 is in its right place, and that the Chaldean is raised up to chastise Israel, it is strange that not a word is said of Israel in all the passage; it is the Chaldean's demeanour

[1] *Expositor*, l. c.

among the nations of the world universally that is described. And the same is true of i. 12—17, where the only reference to Israel is in the phrase "we shall not die," and a change of text adopted by many would remove even this reference. The prophet's reference to the nations in general is due to the universality of his moral conception, for it is not Israel alone that is "righteous" in contrast to the conqueror, but other peoples also (i. 13). His view is similar to that of Nahum ii., iii.

(4) Budde would date the prophecy about B.C. 621—15, in the years immediately following Josiah's reformation. During these years Israel had a "good conscience," which would explain the term "righteous" applied to the people (i. 4, 13). It is not Israel alone, however, that is called righteous, but other nations also (i. 13); and even as applied to Israel the term "righteous" is a very uncertain criterion of date. The claim to "righteousness" is really a claim to be worshippers of the true God, and this claim was not made for the first time under Josiah (Numb. xxiii. 10); neither did it cease to be made after Josiah's death. Ezek. xxv. 8 appears to intimate that even the nations were not unaware of Israel's claim to this pre-eminence. The epithet "wicked" bestowed on the nations is the counterpart of "righteous" applied to Israel, and means primarily that the nations did not know Jehovah the true God. The antithesis is clearly expressed in Jer. x. 24, 25, where Israel prays: "O Lord, correct me, but with judgement...pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name." And the antithesis is current in all subsequent literature; cf. Is. xiii. 11, xiv. 5, liii. 9, xxvi. 10; Hab. iii. 13. And on the claim of the people to righteousness even after the fall of the city, cf. Lam. v. 7. See also 2 Kings xxiv. 3; Jer. xxxi. 29; Ezek. xviii. 2.

To the date B.C. 621—15 there are several objections on the theory that the Assyrians are the subject of the prophecy. It is true that not much is known of the history of Assyria after the death of Assurbanipal in 626, but it is certain that its hold over the western provinces had become greatly relaxed. If ch. i. 2—4 refer to violence and oppression on the

part of the Assyrians, the terms are greatly exaggerated if applied to the condition of Judah at the time. The phrase "the Torah (law) is slacked," i.e. paralysed, does not consist well with the fact that Josiah was at the time carrying his reforming movement into the northern kingdom without hindrance, and that a little later he disputed with Necho the possession of Galilee. Neither is the language "spoiling and violence are before me," "there is strife, and contention riseth up," natural, when applied to Judah of that day, which was virtually independent. Such language far exceeds what is said in Nahum i.

Again, the knowledge possessed by the prophet of the Chaldeans, and the great *rôle* of destroyers of the Assyrian power assigned to them, are not very probable at a date so early as 621—15. Nabopolassar, the Chaldean ruler of Babylon, was still probably the nominal vassal of Assyria. The virtual independence of Babylon was a thing that had occurred too often in history, and too often disappeared, to awaken any great expectations. The Chaldeans, one of whose princes had seized the throne of Babylon, formed several small principalities about the mouths of the two great rivers and on the Persian Gulf, but there was nothing in their movements hitherto to suggest the great part they were to play, after the fall of Nineveh made them heirs of an empire almost without a stroke. It is not certain whether they took part in the attack on Nineveh to which it succumbed; Herodotus ascribes the capture of the city to the Medes, and does not refer to Babylon[1]. The Medes were satisfied with the acquisition of Assyria proper, a country like their own, while the Chaldeans naturally pushed northward into Mesopotamia, meeting with no resistance till they encountered the Egyptians at Carchemish on the fords of the Euphrates. The description of the Chaldeans in ch. i.

[1] Winckler, *Altorient. Untersuch.* I. 63, II. 170, *The Medes and the Fall of Nineveh*. Clay tablets found in Nippur shew that Babylon was still an Assyrian province in the fourth year of Assur-etil-ilani, the successor of Assurbanipal, and probably it continued to be so even in the reign of the last king. See Mürdter-Delitzsch, *Gesch. Babyloniens und Assyriens*, pp. 234, 235. See *Appendix*.

5—11, the rush of their cavalry, the rapidity of their siege operations, the velocity of their movements, and their irresistible might, is scarcely conceivable before the battle of Carchemish (605—4). It is at this date that the Chaldeans first come within the horizon of Jeremiah (ch. xxv., xlvi.), for the foe from the North of his earlier prophecies is rather, as most scholars suppose, the Scythians. And as late as the battle of Megiddo (B.C. 608) the historian still speaks of Assyria as the only power to be encountered in the East, saying: "In his (Josiah's) days Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates" (2 Kings xxiii. 29; cf. 2 Chron. xxxv. 20).

(5) The woes pronounced in ch. ii. 5 ff. might be applied either to the Assyrians or Chaldeans; there is little in them that favours one application more than another. The pride and overbearing demeanour referred to in ch. ii. 4 are elsewhere spoken of as characteristic of the Chaldeans; the term "pride" is a name given to Babylon, Jer. l. 31, 32; comp. Hab. i. 7. The charge of "spoiling" all nations and being the foe and oppressor of mankind, though made by Nahum against Assyria (ch. iii. 1, 19), is elsewhere brought against Babylon: "How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst lay low the nations!" "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and overthrew the cities thereof?" (Is. xiv. 12, 16; cf. Hab. i. 10). The reference to "violence toward Lebanon" (ch. ii. 17) finds a parallel in Is. xiv. 8, "the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us," though of course the Assyrians used the wood of Lebanon for their buildings no less than the Babylonians. The charge of contemptuous humiliation of conquered nations and kings, under the figure of making them drunk and looking on their shame, is one that might be made against any ancient conqueror (Jer. li. 7). Perhaps the language "to set his nest on high" (ch. ii. 9) is more suitable to Nineveh than Babylon, but little stress can be laid on words which are in any case figurative.

There is, however, one point which is rather adverse to

the supposition that different nations are referred to in i. 5—11 and i. 12—17. In i. 16 the nation spoken of deifies its might or its weapons, "he sacrificeth unto his net, and burneth incense unto his drag." In i. 11 virtually the same thing is said of the Chaldeans, "he whose might is his god." It is improbable that the same thing should be said of two different nations; and is it not doubly improbable that such an impious trait should be attributed to the Chaldeans at the same time that they are represented as Jehovah's instruments for overthrowing the godless Assyrians? Equally strange is the statement in i. 9, "they come all for violence," or, "wrong," if said of a people who were going to play the part of liberators of Israel.

The verses ch. i. 5—11 would not read quite naturally after ch. ii. 4. It may be the case that ii. 5 does not follow ii. 4 naturally, but the true reading of *v.* 5 has been lost. And finally, in the woes pronounced on the oppressor it is all the remnant of the peoples that shall rise up against him and spoil him (ii. 7, 8), and not a particular nation such as the Chaldeans.

It must be acknowledged that the way in which the oppressor is spoken of in i. 12—17 and ii. implies close acquaintance with him. If he is the Chaldean, Judah must already have suffered from the ravages of that people. If the oppressor could be supposed to be the Assyrian, the prophet's familiarity with him would be quite natural. The prophecy would then form a complete parallel to that of Nahum, to which in any case it has many similarities. The difficulties, however, in the way of supposing the Assyrian the subject of the prophecy, some of which have been mentioned, are very considerable. Upon the whole the first mentioned theory, which accepts ch. i. as it stands, and explains *vv.* 2—4 of wrongdoing on the part of the people of Judah themselves, is the one which has fewest difficulties, though it must be confessed that the interpretation which is put upon ch. i. 2—11 is not quite natural.

The uncertainty about the composition of ch. i.—ii. 4 is reflected in the conclusions reached by other scholars. G. A. Smith marshals the opinions of his predecessors in

three classes: (*a*) those who take i. 2—4 to refer to the wrong done by unjust and cruel Jews to their countrymen, and *vv.* 5—11 to refer to Jehovah's raising up the Chaldeans to punish the sin of Judah; (*b*) those who take *vv.* 2—4 to refer to foreign oppression and 5—11 to refer to the Chaldeans as instruments of this violence; (*c*) Budde's view as detailed above. After examining the arguments adduced, especially by Davidson, against this view, G. A. Smith inclines to accept it on the whole, with the suggestion that the oppressor in i. 5—11 may be Egypt rather than Assyria. Nowack (*Die kleinen Propheten*) would separate i. 5—11 and assign it to an entirely different author. This is substantially the view of von Baudissin (*Einleitung*), who holds that in i. 5—11 Habakkuk is quoting an older prophecy of the rise of the Chaldeans. Marti (*Das Dodekapropheton*) makes i. 5—10, 14 f. the original prophecy of Habakkuk dating from B.C. 605 after the battle of Carchemish, and the rest of ch. i. (with the exception of a few verses) and ii. 1—4 he regards as part of a Psalm of a date anywhere between the 5th and 2nd century. Driver (*The Minor Prophets*) somewhat haltingly accepts Davidson's view, but suggests that "i. 2—11 may reflect the impression left upon [the prophet's] mind, when he first thought of the Chaldeans as appointed for the punishment of Israel's sin, and i. 12 ff. may express the perplexity which he became conscious of afterwards when the character of the Chaldeans became more fully known to him." W. H. Ward (in the *I.C.C.*) is disappointingly brief, but he seems to take ii. 1—4 as a later utterance of the same writer, "unless we may regard i. 1—11 as a dramatic retrospect, explaining the subject condition of the Jewish people."

There seems to be no real objection to taking i.—ii. 4 as dramatized history. In i. 2—4, throwing himself into the past, he explains why God allowed the Chaldeans to punish Judah at all by describing the corruption of the people. In i. 5—11 the terrible oppression that they wrought is depicted. Then in i. 12—17 the prophet complains that the instrument of punishment is far more worthy of punishment than the victim, and in ii. 1—4 he gets his answer, the keynote or text of the whole book, expressed somewhat oracularly in the

words "The just shall live by his faithfulness." In this case the book would most naturally be dated either shortly after B.C. 597 or in the early years of the Exile.

Two further suggestions deserve notice. Prof. Betteridge of Rochester Theological Seminary, accepting Budde's view that the Chaldeans are represented as raised up to execute vengeance on the Assyrians, but rejecting his date as impossible, proposes the theory that the book in its present form was composed by Habakkuk in the reign of Hezekiah, and ended in B.C. 701, when Sennacherib was recalled from his invasion of Judah by tidings of a revolt in Babylonia. But, as Peake points out, the Chaldeans at that date were hardly in a position to arouse great hopes that they would be successful against the might of Assyria. Peake himself is inclined, though with misgivings, to regard i. 2—4, i. 2—ii. 14 as originating in the Exile, probably between B.C. 560 and 550. He thinks that the author was either born in Babylonia, or taken there as a child with Jehoiachin in B.C. 597 so that he did not remember the siege and sack of Jerusalem. Peake has a full discussion of the various theories on the subject in *The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament*, pp. 151—171.

§ 3. Integrity of the Prophecy.

The difficulties connected with ch. i. 5—11 have been sufficiently adverted to in § 2. A number of scholars have contended that the passage ch. ii. 9—20 is an addition to the genuine prophecy of Habakkuk, which itself goes no further than ii. 8. The objections to the genuineness of *vv.* 9—20 do not appear of great weight. They are fully stated by Kuenen, Vol. iii. p. 388.

Kuenen has the feeling that the strophe *vv.* 9—11, "Woe to him that getteth an evil gain for his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the hand of evil" &c., could hardly have been said of the Chaldean. It is not quite clear where the difficulty lies. Surely "delivered from the hand of evil" need not imply present danger, but might be said of prospective or possible calamity. There may be some uncertainty as to the text of *v.* 10, but the idea

expressed in it, "thou hast consulted shame to thy house" finds a parallel in Is. xiv. 20, "thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people." Hitzig thought that the passage applied to Jehoiakim (Jer. xxii. 13), but another commentator has well asked, Did Jehoiakim cut off many peoples? (*v.* 10).

The originality of the strophe *vv.* 15—17 is also doubted by Kuenen, partly on account of the repetition of *v.* 8 in *v.* 17; and partly because devastations of Lebanon are mentioned, "of which nothing is known." The repetition of a *refrain* is of the course usual; repetition rather tends to show that *v.* 17 is by the same author as *v.* 8, which is acknowledged to be authentic. The statement that "nothing is known" of devastations of Lebanon by the Chaldeans is strange; certainly the author of Is. xiv. 8 knew of them: "Their trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us." Kuenen also appears to think that the words "woe to him that giveth his neighbour drink" refer to some actual occurrence. It is said that Cyaxares made the Scythian chiefs drunk at a banquet and then murdered them. Whether the story be true or not, there is not much likelihood that a writer in Judah had heard of it. At all events the charge against the Chaldean here is different; it is that he makes his neighbour drunk, not in order to murder him, but to look upon his shame. The figurativeness of the whole passage is evident from the threat that the Chaldean himself shall be treated in the same way: he also shall be made drunk and lie uncovered; and it is the cup of Jehovah's right hand of which he shall drink.

It appears improbable to Kuenen that the strophe *vv.* 18—20 can refer to the Chaldeans, because the prophet could hardly have blamed a *heathen* nation for its idolatry; the idolaters whom he has in view must be people "who knew better" (i.e. some persons not heathens). The whole scope of the passage is against Kuenen's interpretation of it. What the prophet assails in these verses is idolatry in itself, the idolatry of the heathen. It is in writers of a somewhat later date that this theoretical condemnation of idolatry is com-

mon, e.g. Is. xl. 18 seq., xliv. 9 seq., xlvi. 5 seq., Jer. x. 1—10 (verses later than Jer.), Ps. cxv. 4—8; earlier prophets usually condemn idolatry in Israel. The prophet, however, anticipates in so remarkable a manner several modes of thought common at a later time that the difficulty cannot be called serious; and as to the improbability of a prophet condemning the heathen for their idolatry, it may be said that the prophets sometimes judge the conduct of the heathen from their own point of view rather than from that of the heathen themselves. Thus in Is. xlvii. 10 a consciousness of wrongdoing is ascribed to Babylon which she can scarcely have had, "Thou hast trusted in thy wickedness, thou hast said, None seeth me"; and Is. x. 10, 11 makes the king of Assyria call the idols of the nations "vanities," which is Isaiah's own word for them.

More plausible is the objection to the strophe *vv.* 12—14, which appears to contain reminiscences of several passages, some of which are late. Thus *v.* 12 is similar to Mic. iii. 10; *v.* 14 to Is. xi. 9, and *v.* 13 to Jer. li. 58. Both Micah and Isaiah are earlier than Habakkuk, but Jer. li. in its present form is probably later. The words in Jer., apart from the transposition of "vanity" and "fire," have something unusual in their construction, and seem rather loosely connected with the preceding clause. The words therefore may be original in Habakkuk, and this all the more, seeing that Jer. l., li. are so greatly coloured by reminiscences from earlier prophecies. The phrase, "*Behold is it not* of the Lord of hosts?" (*v.* 13) is peculiar, and the reading followed by the LXX, "*Are not these things* from the Lord of hosts?" is simpler. Even this reading does not imply that what follows, "the peoples labour for the fire," is a quotation, though it permits that sense. *These* (i.e. the following) *things* may refer to the contents of the statement, and these may be the prophet's own. Opinions will differ on the question whether Habakkuk was likely to quote Isaiah and Micah.

The question whether ch. iii. belong to the prophecy of Habakkuk, or be an independent poem, cannot be answered with certainty. The musical directions with which the poem is provided shew that it was at some time or other used in the musical service of the Temple. Such musical directions

may be assumed to be post-exilic; at all events they are probably in no case due to the authors of the hymns to which they are appended (see notes on iii. 19). Kuenen has inferred from the musical notes that the hymn once belonged to a book of sacred songs, from which it has been transferred to the book of the prophet, possibly because ascribed to him in a title, just as certain Psalms are ascribed in the LXX to the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (Ps. cxlvi. ff.). On this supposition the authorship of Habakkuk would be very uncertain, for even in the Psalter the names of authors given in the titles to the Psalms are in many cases nothing more than conjectures or traditions of greater or less antiquity. The alternative supposition would be that, though an integral part of the prophecy, the poem was used in the liturgical service, and that the musical directions with which it was provided for this purpose continued to stand. Such a use of any part of a prophetic book has no parallel.

The passage is very indefinite, giving no clue to the occasion on which it was written, and it has few points of contact with the prophecy, ch. i., ii. The "day of trouble" (ch. iii. 16) cannot be the Chaldean invasion (ch. i. 5 ff.), for the whole scope of the prophecy shews that the Chaldeans were already present; neither does the prophecy suggest any approaching aggravation in the Chaldean oppression; all that is stated is that immediate relief from it cannot be guaranteed (ch. ii. 3). The "day of trouble" is manifestly a Theophany, a manifestation of Jehovah for the deliverance of His people, like that of the Exodus; such a manifestation is terrible even though its issue be salvation (Is. xxi. 1—10). The passage, ch. ii. 4, which contains an implicit promise of the destruction of the oppressor, does not suggest a Theophany, and in the following woes the judgement is executed on the Chaldean not by the Lord directly but by the nations, who rise up and spoil their spoiler. At the same time it is possible that the prophet might have idealized the destruction of the Chaldean as a great interposition and revelation of Jehovah, as other prophets do (Is. xiii.). The last verse of ch. ii., "Be silent before him, all the earth" (R.V. marg.), perhaps suggests a self-revelation of the Lord which all flesh

shall behold, and ch. iii. attaches itself very well to these words.

There is little else in the poem that has any bearing on date or authorship. The application of the term "anointed" to the people might suggest that the royal house no longer existed (Ps. cv. 15). The tone of reflection on Providence which is characteristic of the prophecy (cf. Jer. xii. 1 ff.), and which makes the book read almost like a chapter from the literature of the Wisdom, is very unlike the manner of ch. iii., which has affinities rather with lyrics of a pretty late age. At the same time the date of the hymn cannot be brought down very low, for traces of its influence appear in Ps. lxxvii. 15—20.

Cheyne, indeed (*Origin of the Psalter*), thinks that the most natural position for it is in the Persian period, and says "it was doubtless appended to Habakkuk for the same reason for which Is. lxiii. 7—lxiv. was attached to the great prophecy of the Restoration, viz. that the earlier national troubles seemed to the Jewish Church to be typical of its own sore troubles after the Return." Ward says vaguely "Very likely this Psalm belongs to the Maccabean period." G. A. Smith is more cautious, and does not exclude the possibility that the Psalm is the work of Habakkuk. Marti holds this for impossible, and thinks the Psalm cannot be earlier than the second Temple, while the term "thine anointed" (iii. 13) points to the time of the Maccabees. The last consideration, however, seems to have little weight, inasmuch as the term "anointed" appears to refer to the people generally rather than to the leader. Driver sums up very characteristically as follows: "On the whole, however reluctant we may be to conclude that the ode in ch. iii. is not the work of Habakkuk, it must be admitted that it contains features which make it difficult to affirm his authorship confidently."

The connexion of the Psalm with the rest of the book is, however, closer than most scholars affirm. It may be taken as a poem or Psalm on the text "The just shall live by his faithfulness." The author writes as the personification of the nation, and as such claims to have seen God's mighty

works in the nation's history, and more particularly at the Exodus. The description of the oppression of the enemy is no doubt suggested by the oppression which the nation had lately suffered. On thinking of God's mighty works of deliverance of old the poet's soul faints with emotion (iii. 16), and he feels that however dark the immediate prospect may be he can rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of his salvation (iii. 18). It may be noted that a very slight alteration of the difficult and obscure text of iii. 16 *b* will give the sense "Blessed is he that can rest in the day of trouble when thou comest up (or, for thy coming up) against the people that invadeth him in troops." If this interpretation of the Psalm be in any way correct, it may well be the work of Habakkuk, written perhaps later and in still darker days than the rest of the book, but reiterating the same splendid faith. The musical directions would, of course, belong to a later date.

§ 4. Contents of the Book.

Ch. i. (1) The prophet complains that his appeals to God against the violence and wrongdoing in Israel remain unheard by Jehovah, who beholds the evil in silence (*vv.* 1—4).

(2) In answer to his complaint the prophet's view is directed to the Chaldeans. This people is described—their fierceness, the lightning-like movements of their cavalry, their irresistible onset, their contempt for kings who oppose them, and fortresses that bar their way, and finally their deifying their own might (*vv.* 5—11).

(3) The answer does not ease but rather aggravates the moral problem before the prophet—how the righteous Ruler of the world can look in silence upon the wrongs perpetrated on the earth. The character of the Chaldeans fills his mind, their cruelties and inhumanity, their remorseless and contemptuous trampling upon the nations of the earth, whom they sweep into their net as if they were fishes of the sea and creeping things, and he asks in despair, Will God suffer all this to go on for ever? (*vv.* 12—17).

Ch. ii. (1) The prophet's "plea" or remonstrance (i. 12—17) is finished, and he sets himself as a watchman to look forth if God will vouchsafe an answer to his pleading. He is bidden to write the answer, when it comes, on the tablets, that all may read it easily. The answer is given in the shape of a moral distinction, and this distinction carries in it the different destinies of the Chaldean and the Righteous—destruction on the one side and life on the other (*vv.* 1—4).

(2) The destruction of the Chaldean is predicted in a series of woes upon the evil traits of his nature and upon his deeds (*vv.* 5—20). (*a*) Woe upon his insatiable lust of conquest (*vv.* 5—8). (*b*) Woe on his rapacity and self-aggrandisement (*vv.* 9—11). (*c*) Woe on his oppression of the peoples to gratify his architectural pride (*vv.* 12—14). (*d*) Woe on his contemptuous humiliation of prostrate potentates and nations (*vv.* 15—17). (*e*) Woe upon his irrational idolatries (*vv.* 18—20).

Ch. iii. (1) A prayer that Jehovah would renew His great ancient "work" in delivering His people. It is the community of people into whose mouth the prayer is put. Though fear seizes them when they hear or think of His terrible revelation of Himself at the Exodus (cf. Ex. xiv. 30, 31), nevertheless they pray that He would renew this work again at this late time in their history; only when He comes forth in wrath let Him remember mercy! (*vv.* 1, 2).

(2) Brilliant description of the ancient Theophany (*vv.* 3—15). (*a*) The Theophany in the form of a tempest in which Jehovah reveals Himself in awful light. The terror of nature and men at His presence (*vv.* 3—7). (*b*) The poet asks, What is the purpose of Jehovah's manifestation? Is His wrath against the rivers and the sea? The question is a rhetorical way of giving expression to the destructive effects on nature of Jehovah's revelation of Himself, and leads to a new description of these effects. The mountains tremble, the sea rises in wild commotion, and sun and moon hide themselves in terror at His glittering arrows as they fly (*vv.* 6—11). (*c*) The question of the purpose of Jehovah's appearing is answered: He is come forth for the salvation of His people, His anointed. Description of the destruction of

their adversaries, Pharaoh and his host, who thought to swallow them up (*vv.* 12—15). Verse 16 expresses anew the alarm which the recital or thought of Jehovah's manifestation occasions.

(3) Conclusion (*vv.* 17—19). The people express their joy in the Lord. Though earthly blessings fail He remains their portion. And from Him they draw a freshness of life, a sense of freedom and power, which are unfailing.

The prophet's language is forcible, and his style, owing to the form of dialogue into which he throws his thoughts, highly dramatic. If the interpretation adopted in the notes be correct, ch. i. 1—4 refers to sin and wrongdoing in Israel; if the opinion of many interpreters of the prophecy be accepted, these verses relate to acts of oppression suffered by Israel. In the latter case the prophet would make hardly any reference to the sin of his own people (ch. i. 12), and the prophecy would in this respect be similar to that of Nahum. In any case the two prophets have several points of agreement. First, while Nahum makes no reference to the sin of his own people, the reference in Habakkuk occupies a subordinate place. In both it is the cruelty and atrocious inhumanity of the oppressor that engross attention. Secondly, the view of both prophets is universal, embracing the world. The oppressor is denounced, not merely for his unrighteous acts against Israel, but because he is the enemy of mankind. In contrast to him other nations besides Israel are "righteous" (ch. i. 13). And thirdly, both prophets have the same lofty conception of Jehovah, God of Israel. His rule embraces the world, the destinies of the nations and mankind universally are in His hand. It is their universalistic conception of Jehovah which explains the broad view which they take of the history of nations and the life of mankind over all the earth. But while Nahum's strong faith in the power and righteousness of Jehovah assured him of the speedy downfall of the oppressor, the more contemplative mind of his contemporary Habakkuk found a hard moral problem in the fact that God looked on in silence while men perpetrated their deeds of violence upon the earth. To all reflective minds

in Israel the problem of problems was God. "It is *God*," says Job, "that hath made my heart faint, and the Almighty that hath troubled me" (xxiii. 16). It is to God eventually that all that happens in the history of nations and in the life of men must be referred. As the problem before the prophet is moral, and therefore universal, so the solution which he reaches is also moral and of universal validity. The different characters of the oppressor and those who are oppressed respectively carry in them their different destinies (ch. ii. 4).

The subordinate place given by the prophet to the sin of Israel, and the strong light into which he throws the ruthlessness of their oppressor, in such vivid contrast to his contemporaries, Zephaniah and Jeremiah, is remarkable (cf. § 2, p. 46 ff.). Equally remarkable is his reflection on the moral problems raised by the history of his people and of the nations. Both peculiarities are characteristic of a later period in the literature of Israel. If the date of Habakkuk had to be fixed from the circle of his ideas alone, he might be assigned to the end of the Exile or later. The instance shews how precarious it is to draw inferences as to the date of a passage or a writing solely from the ideas which it contains. The literature is far too scanty to enable us to trace the course of religious thought and language with any such certainty as to fix the dates at which particular ideas or expressions arose. Even when it can be said of a *mode* of thought and language that it is characteristic of a particular time, as for example the post-exilic period, it should not be forgotten that a mode never arises all at once. An earlier period may be expected to shew individual instances of what is observed to be the fashion of a later period. The argument that, if similar ideas occur in two passages or two writings, they may be assigned to the same age, leaves no room for individuality in the different writers. The Books of Jeremiah and Habakkuk shew conclusively enough how different the reflections were which God's Providence in His treatment of His people awoke in the minds of two contemporary prophets.

The central point of Habakkuk's message is, as has been said above, the divine oracle "The just shall live by his faith-

fulness." Here the term "live" is used not of physical existence, but of the higher life which rises triumphant over troubles and disasters. The writer perhaps has hardly stopped to analyse it exactly, but it carries at least the germs of a belief in a future life, and it goes further than Driver's definition of "living in the light and consciousness of divine favour." "Faithfulness," again, is not "faith" in the modern sense, an idea perhaps unknown to the O.T., but "steadfastness under temptation," i.e. unflinching loyalty to Jehovah, or when applied to God "trustworthiness." It is probably this latter meaning which the LXX has in mind when it renders *ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται*, "but the just shall live by my faithfulness." i.e. "as a result of my trustworthiness." The N.T. quotations read into this phrase a meaning which it did not originally bear. St Paul uses it twice (Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11) in support of his doctrine of justification by faith, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews x. 37 we find the LXX version (with the word "my" attached to "just one" instead of to "faith") used to emphasize the blessings of faith. The N.T. writers are so far justified that the phrase as it occurs in the O.T. is a very striking and pregnant one, and its full meaning is not exhausted by its application to the prophet's own times.

HABAKKUK

THE [1]burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see. 1

O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear? 2
I cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save.

[1] Or, *oracle*

CH. I.

1. *The burden*] **the oracle.** Comp. ii. 6, "take up" a proverb. Numb. xxiii. 7; Is. xiv. 4. See Nahum i. 1.

did see] Comp. Is. ii. 1, "*the word* that Isaiah saw"; xiii. 1, "the oracle which Isaiah did see." Am. i. 1; Mic. i. 1. In the early times of prophecy the ectasy or exalted condition of mind was more usual and the things revealed to the prophet were *seen* by him. Thus Micaiah ben Imlah said: "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have no shepherd," 1 Kings xxii. 17, 19. In later times these terms "see," "vision," and the like, which had been formed in the early period, continued to be retained, and any revelation was called a "vision"; and "see" was employed of the act of receiving a revelation, even when it was a word (Is. ii. 1). On the name Habakkuk see Introduction, p. 43.

2—4. THE PROPHET'S COMPLAINT THAT HE HAS LONG CRIED OUT AGAINST EVILS UNHEARD.

2. *how long shall I cry*] lit. *shall I have been crying?* Ex. x. 3, xvi. 28; Ps. lxxx. 4. If the view of the book taken in Introd., p. 54, is correct, the prophet puts himself back into the evil days before the Chaldean invasion. He has long been crying, but he has received no answer from Heaven; the evil proceeds unchecked, even unregarded of God (*v.* 3). For the expression "cry for help" cf. Ps. xviii. 6, 41, xxii. 24.

wilt not hear] **dost not hear.**

I cry out unto thee of violence] Or, **Violence!** this being the word which forms his cry. Cf. Job xix. 7; Jer. xx. 8. The term "violence" is equivalent to wrong, injury, whether accompanied with force or nôt, Gen. xvi. 5.

wilt not save] **dost not save**, or, give deliverance, Ps. xviii. 41 (Heb. 42). The cry of wrong and injury though long continued has evoked no interposition of God, nor been met with any help. The prophet seems to complain not only of injury which he sees around him, but which he suffers (Job xix. 7; Jer. xx. 8). But it is a question when he says "I" whether he does not make himself one

3 Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and [1]look upon perverseness? for spoiling and violence are before me: and
4 there is strife, and contention riseth up. Therefore the law is slacked, and judgement [2]doth never go forth: for

[1] Or, *cause* me *to look* [2] Or, *goeth not forth unto victory*

with some class in Israel, namely, the godly, who are wronged by the wicked.

3. *shew me iniquity*] **cause me to see iniquity**. God by His interposition might have checked the iniquity; by His refraining the continuance of it is virtually due to Him. One thing pains the prophet—that he has to behold iniquity; and another perplexes him—that God, the Righteous One, brings him into such a trial, or leaves him in it. The Hebrew mind was the more profoundly agitated by the moral anomalies in the world, because it could not help ascribing them directly to God, who was the immediate cause of all things. The feeling is often expressed in Job, e.g. xxiii. 16, 17.

The term "iniquity" is used both of physical evil, "affliction" (Jer. iv. 14; Job v. 6), and moral evil, "wickedness"; here of the latter, as generally, e.g. in the common phrase "workers of iniquity."

look upon perverseness] Better, **trouble**. The term "grievance" or "trouble" (*v.* 13), properly "labour," toil, has also the double sense of misery, pain, sorrow, travail (Is. liii. 11), or mischief, wrongdoing (Ps. vii. 15, xciv. 20; Is. lix. 4). The latter half of the verse "spoiling and violence" is in favour of understanding all the terms not so much of evils suffered as of evils inflicted. The prophet is perplexed because God looks on unconcerned when men perpetrate wrong.

spoiling and violence are before me] The words again combined, Jer. vi. 7, xx. 8; Ezek. xlv. 9; Am. iii. 10. The term "spoiling" means violent mishandling when used of a person, destruction or devastation when said of a thing. Is. xiii. 6; Job v. 21, 22; Hos. vii. 13; Ps. xii. 6. With "before me" comp. Jer. vi. 7.

there is strife] This is the condition of things that has come about and prevails. The terms "strife" and "contention" certainly suggest animosities between members of the same community rather than injuries inflicted on a subject people by their conquerors. The conquerors of Israel did not mix among the inhabitants or interfere with individual persons, they merely demanded political subjection and tribute, and the latter they collected not from the people but from their rulers. Comp. the use of the two words in Jer. xv. 10.

4. *the law is slacked*] lit. *numbed*, rigid, i.e. motionless, paralysed and ineffectual. The term "law" (*torah*) means properly divine instruction given orally at the mouth of the priest (Jer. xviii. 18;

the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore

Mal. ii. 6, 7); then also that given orally by the prophet (Is. i. 10), and more generally any oral instruction (Prov. i. 8, vi. 20). In a wider sense it is divine instruction regarding any subject, particularly matters of ritual; then specially of the Law of Moses in Deuteronomy, and finally of the whole Pentateuch. In some cases the word seems generalized to mean the revelation as a whole communicated to Israel, particularly as being essentially the true knowledge of the true God, which it is the mission of Israel the servant of the Lord to impart to the nations, Is. xlii. 4; cf. xlix. 6, li. 4. Parallel to the word in this use is the term "judgement," e.g. Is. xlii. 3, 4, "till he have set judgement in the earth, and the isles shall look unto his *torah*." See next clause.

judgement doth never go forth] The word translated "never" does not seem anywhere to mean "at no time," "on no occasion," it appears always to refer to the future, e.g. Ps. x. 11; Is. xiii. 20; Am. viii. 7. The words, therefore, should strictly be rendered: *and judgement shall never go forth*—a sense unsuitable to the connexion. It has been proposed to emend to a somewhat similar word meaning "straightforward." But it is not improbable that the word has here some modified meaning, and that the sense is akin to Is. xlii. 3, "judgement unto truth," or, *according to truth*, paraphrased "unto victory" Matt. xii. 20. The R.V. marg. in the present passage renders "goeth not forth unto victory," but this meaning of the word *neṣaḥ* is rather Aramaic than Hebrew, and occurs only in the late passage 1 Chr. xxix. 11. "Law" here hardly means the specific decision of the priest on particular questions, nor "judgement" the sentence of the magistrate in particular causes; rather the sense is: law, i.e. moral (social) law (Am. ii. 4; Hos. iv. 6) is paralysed and cannot assert its validity, and judgement, i.e. "right," comes not forth in its fulness, but is seen maimed. Those who take these verses to refer to heathen oppression understand law and judgement in the sense they have in Is. xl. seq., of the true religion of Jehovah, and consider the prophet's complaint to be that the predominance of the heathen powers represses the true religion and prevents its expansion and effectiveness. This sense is less in harmony with the other statements of the passage.

the wicked doth compass about the righteous] Unlike its use in Ps. cxlii. 7 "compass" is employed here in a hostile sense, *to hem in*, so as to impair one's liberties and just rights (Job iii. 23). G. A. Smith renders "beleaguers." Both "righteous" and "wicked" are collective terms, referring to classes. The antithesis was used not only of two classes in Israel (Is. iii. 10, 11, v. 23, xi. 4; Zeph. i. 3), but particulaly in later times "wicked" was used of the heathen nations and "righteous" of Israel. The antithesis is taken in the latter sense here by those who consider *vv.* 1—4 to refer to heathen oppressions, cf. *v.* 13.

5 judgement goeth forth perverted. Behold ye among the
nations, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for [1]I
work a work in your days, which ye will not believe
6 though it be told you. For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans,
that bitter and hasty nation; which march through the
breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are

[1] Or *one worketh*

judgement goeth forth perverted] i.e. "right," the good cause of the righteous, fails to prevail.

5—11. THE ANSWER OF GOD TO THE PROPHET'S COMPLAINT.

The wrongs complained of will bring their punishment. The Lord raiseth up the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation. They are irresistible; they laugh at kings, and fortresses they heap up dust and take.

The section is transposed by many scholars to come after ii. 4, and Budde regards it as referring originally to the Assyrians. See Introd., p. 48.

5. *Behold ye among the nations*] For "among the nations" the LXX and Pesh. read "ye despisers" (*bōgᵉdīm* for *bᵉgōyīm*), and part of the phrase "wonder marvellously" they translated "and perish." With this translation the "despisers" addressed are the wrongdoers of *vv.* 1–4. It is in this form that the verse is quoted by St Paul in his sermon at Antioch, Acts xiii. 41.

I work a work] The marg. has *one worketh* a work, a construction equivalent to the *pass.*, "a work is wrought." This is not very natural. Though the omission of pron. "I" perhaps is without parallel, the rendering of the text is more probable. So LXX. The rendering *he worketh* would be more according to usage, but the connexion with *v.* 6 is then broken.

ye will not believe] Perhaps: **ye would not believe though it were told you,** i.e. in other circumstances—unless you saw it.

6. *raise up the Chaldeans*] For the Chaldeans see the note after *v.* 11. Their rise to power dates from cir. B.C. 625. The prophet, if he is writing some 30 or 40 years later, throws himself dramatically back into the past. After "raise up" some MSS. of the LXX add "against you."

bitter and hasty nation] Spoken of temper or disposition "bitter" is vehement and passionate, Jud. xviii. 25; 2 Sam. xvii. 8; and "hasty" is sudden in action, driven headlong by violent impulse.

through the breadth of the earth] His operations extend over the world, and his object is conquest, to seize for a possession the dwelling-places of other peoples. Job xviii. 21; Jer. ix. 19, xxx. 18; Is. xxxii. 18. The phrase "that are not theirs" occurs again ch. ii. 6; cf. Deut. vi. 10, 11.

not theirs. [1]They are terrible and dreadful: their judge- 7
ment and their dignity proceed from themselves. Their 8
horses also are swifter than leopards, and are more fierce
than the evening wolves; and their horsemen [2]spread
themselves: yea, their horsemen come from far; they fly

[1] Heb. *He*, and so in vv. 8, 9.
[2] Or, *bear themselves proudly*

7. *terrible and dreadful*] The first word occurs again only in Cant. vi. 4, 10, "terrible as an army with banners." The noun is frequently used of the terror inspired by the sight of an object, Job xxxix. 20, xli. 14; of the terror caused by the manifestation of the Almighty, Job ix. 34, xiii. 21, and of the terrors of death, Ps. lv. 4. The second word is that usually rendered "terrible" in R.V., meaning "to be feared." Cf. Gen. xxviii. 17.

their judgement and their dignity] **from himself proceedeth his judgement and his dignity.** The words carry on the idea of "terrible and dreadful," and describe the Chaldean's manner of bearing himself among the nations, though it may be uncertain whether "his judgement" be that which regulates his own conduct or that which he imposes on the nations. The former sense is the more vigorous. The Chaldean's own sense of himself corresponds to the dread he inspires. He is imperious and autocratic, allows no considerations from without to modify his action, his own haughty mind alone determines his procedure. Similarly his "dignity" or majesty is the supremacy and sovereignty which he assumes and exercises.

8. *swifter than leopards*] Jer. iv. 13 says, "his horses are swifter than eagles."

more fierce than the evening wolves] lit. *more sharp*. Being parallel to "swift" the term "fierce" probably means keen in attack, eager in flinging themselves on the foe. Gesenius quotes Verg. *Georg*. iii. 264, genus *acre* luporum, and *Æn*. iv. 156, *acri* gaudet equo. The wolf attacks at night when his hunger is keen. For "evening wolves" the LXX reads "wolves of Arabia," supplying different vowels.

their horsemen spread themselves] **and his horsemen bound**, or, **gallop**. The word is used of the springing or bounding of cattle, Mal. iv. 2 (Heb. iii. 20); Jer. l. 11.

horsemen come from far] But the repetition of "horsemen" is unnatural (the LXX omits), and the clause introduces an unequal number of members into the verse. Possibly the words are a marginal explanation of the somewhat uncommon term "gallop."

they fly as an eagle] The bird referred to is probably some kind of vulture, perhaps the griffon vulture, which is common in Palestine. Cf. Mic. i. 16, "enlarge thy baldness as the eagle."

9 as an eagle that hasteth to devour. They come all of
them for violence; [1]their faces are set eagerly [2]*as* the east
10 wind; and they gather captives as the sand. [3]Yea, he
scoffeth at kings, and princes are a derision unto him: he
derideth every strong hold; for he heapeth up dust, and
11 taketh it. [4]Then shall he sweep by *as* a wind, and shall

[1] Heb. *the eagerness* (or *assembling*) *of their faces is &c.*
[2] Or, *towards the east* Or, *forwards*
[3] Or, *And they scoff &c.*
[4] Or, *Then shall the wind sweep by, and he shall pass away*

hasteth to devour] i.e. that swoops upon the prey or carcase.

9. *their faces are set eagerly* as *the east wind*] The clause is obscure in sense, and in all likelihood the text is faulty. Two tentative senses have been suggested: (1) the word rendered "set eagerly," lit. *the eagerness of* their faces, has been connected with the term used of the war-horse, Job xxxix. 24, "he *swalloweth* the ground," i.e. appears to do so in his eagerness and swiftness; cf. Gen. xxiv. 17, "Let me drink" (the same word). Hence the A.V. rendering "Their faces shall sup up *as* the east wind." From this sense of swallowing or gulping up might come the more general one of straining or striving after (as in Neo-Heb.), giving some such sense as *the striving of their faces is* &c. Such a meaning is rather indefinite and flat, and the form of word is not easy to connect with that used in Job xxxix. 24. (2) Others, as Gesen., would connect with the Arab. word signifying a crowd, assemblage, and render: *the mass, crowd, of their faces.* Hence the alternative R.V. marg. "the assembling of their faces."

as *the east wind*] The term properly means *eastward*, but as the spectator when reckoning the quarters of the heavens faced the east, it is supposed that eastwards became equivalent to *forwards* or onwards. The whole clause would mean: *the striving* (or, the crowd) *of their faces is forwards*; the impetuosity and rapidity of their movement being indicated. Such a sense is rather lame, even if it could be legitimately reached.

10. *he scoffeth at kings*] The Chaldean is referred to. No king is able to stand against him.

heapeth up dust] The phrase refers to the banks or "mounds" which the besiegers cast up in order to be on a level with the walls of the besieged fortress and command them, 2 Sam. xx. 15; Jer. xxxii. 24. The ease and rapidity of the Chaldean operations are forcibly expressed. Nothing can withstand their impetuosity. Kings with their armies who might oppose them, and fortresses which might arrest their progress, they laugh at.

11. *Then shall he sweep by* as *a wind*] **Then he sweepeth** &c. The two words "sweep by" and "pass over" occur again Is. viii.

[1]pass over, and be guilty: *even* he whose might is his god.

[1] Or, *transgress*

8, being said of the Assyrian armies under the figure of an overwhelming flood. But both words are used of wind-storms, the first Is. xxi. 1, and the second Prov. x. 25. Arrested for a moment by the fortress, as soon as it is fallen he sweeps onwards, and overruns what lies still before him. "Wind" and "spirit" being the same word in Heb., A.V. rendered *mind*.

and be guilty] **and becometh guilty**. The rhythm of the verse would place this word in the second clause, but the sense is against this position.

even *he whose might is his god*] Rather, **this his might becometh his god**. The Heb. word "this" is as in Ps. xii. 7; the form is more often a relative; hence the R.V. rendering. The clause perhaps explains how he "becomes guilty" or offends. His success intoxicates him, and in his pride of heart he deifies his own might. Cf. Job xii. 6 marg., and the words of the Assyrian king, Is. x. 7 ff., 13 ff., and those of Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 30. For "be guilty" Wellh. suggests tentatively a form of the verb *to set* or make: *and maketh this his might to be his god*. This restores the rhythm, but the order of words is strange. The text is not above suspicion.

The Chaldeans (Heb. *Kasdîm*, in the Assyrian inscriptions *Kaldu*) were properly neither Assyrians nor Babylonians, though no doubt like them a Shemitic people. Their seats were in the southmost parts of the Babylonian plain, towards and on the Persian Gulf. Here they formed a number of small states, one of which was Bît Yakin, the kingdom of Merodach Baladan, which lay on the coast and is called in inscriptions "the land of the sea." If the Shemites penetrated into the plains of the two rivers from the north, the Chaldeans must have formed the vanguard of the immigration, and been thrown into the furthest south by the successive waves of population that followed them; if they entered from the south or south-west, the Chaldeans would be the latest to arrive. This is most probable, for the movement appears always to have been northward, and the steady aim of the Chaldeans was to gain possession of the country lying to the north of their abode and seat themselves upon the throne of Babylon. This their princes succeeded in doing more than once. Merodach Baladan, who gave trouble to three Assyrian monarchs, Tiglath-pileser, Sargon, and Sennacherib, appears to have occupied the throne of Babylon from B.C. 721 to 709, when after a war with Sargon he was dispossessed. The indefatigable veteran renewed the struggle for the crown of Babylon in the time of Sennacherib (B.C. 702), but without success, and disappears from history, though his descendants are spoken of in the annals of the succeeding Assyrian kings. The Chaldean states allied themselves with Shamash-

12 Art not thou from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? [1]we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained

[1] According to an ancient Jewish tradition, *thou diest not.*

shum-ukin, the Babylonian viceroy, in his revolt against his brother Assurbanipal, but were severely chastised by the Assyrian king, and overrun by his armies (see Introd. to Nahum, § 2). Finally, on the death of Assurbanipal (cir. 626), the Chaldean Nabopolassar, taking advantage of the weakness of Assyria, succeeded, by what steps is unknown, in placing the crown of Babylon on his head, and transmitting it to his descendants. The Chaldean empire of Babylon dates from the usurpation of Nabopolassar (B.C. 625), though it was his son Nebuchadrezzar (604—561), the greatest ruler of the East, to whom its splendour was due. Nebuchadrezzar was succeeded by several princes of feeble character, the last of whom was Nabonidus (Nabuna'id), in whose reign the empire fell before the attack of the Medes and Persians under Cyrus (B.C. 538), having lasted less than a century, and with its fall the empire of the East passed from the Shemites to a people of the Aryan race.

12—17. REMONSTRANCE OF THE PROPHET WITH GOD, THE RIGHTEOUS RULER OF THE WORLD, OVER THE CRUELTIES AND INHUMANITY OF THE CHALDEANS.

It is necessary to suppose a considerable interval of time between *vv.* 2—11 and *vv.* 12—17. In the former the prophet has mentally cast himself back into the past, before the Chaldees had actually exerted influence over the Jews. Now the problem is a present and a pressing one. God's instruments have proved themselves far worse than the people they were sent to punish. They have outraged the very laws of humanity.

12. The words down to "die" must form two lines and cannot be divided at "Holy One." Most naturally thus:

Art not thou from everlasting, O Jehovah!
My God, mine Holy One, we shall not die!

Others make the division at "my God." The word "everlasting" occurs again Deut. xxxiii. 27. The eternity of their God is often a ground of confidence to Israel; Is. xl. 28, "the everlasting God, the Lord...fainteth not, neither is weary." Cf. Ps. xc. 2, "from everlasting to everlasting thou art God."

we shall not die] This is said half in supplication, half in assurance; Ps. cxviii. 17; cf. 1 Sam. xx. 14. It cannot be God's ultimate purpose that this nation should be destroyed by the Chaldeans. Comp. the assurance "shall live" ch. ii. 4. The accumulation of divine names shews the earnestness and importunity of the prophet. According to Jewish tradition "we shall not die" is a *tikkun*

him for judgement; and thou, O Rock, hast established
him for correction. Thou that art of purer eyes than to 13
behold evil, and that canst not look on perverseness,
wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously,
and holdest thy peace when the wicked swalloweth up

(emendation) of the "scribes" for *thou shalt not die* (diest not). Opinions differ as to who the "scribes" are. Some consider that the original authors are meant, in which case the *tikkun* would be a second thought of the writer. What occurred to him to say first was "thou diest not," but reverence restrained him from bringing the ideas of death and God together, and he said "we shall not die." We are not informed how this interesting process in the prophet's mind became known to after-times. Obviously this is not the real account of the matter, which is not easy to give. No doubt, however, these so-called emendations—there are eighteen of them—were either (1) real corrections by the scribes, i.e. copyists or editors of the sacred books; or (2) they are no emendations at all, but the original text; the supposed readings which they are said to have supplanted being mere fancies of Jewish scholars as to what might have been written. Possibly they are partly of the one class and partly of the other. In the present passage the LXX agrees with Heb., but in another, Job vii. 20, it exhibits the supposed original reading: "I am become a burden *unto thee*" (Heb. unto myself).

ordained him for judgement] i.e. the Chaldean. The prophet proceeds in the same tone of half prayer, half confidence, struck in "we shall not die," explaining to himself, and venturing to suggest before God, what *must* be the meaning of the Chaldean's supremacy and oppression—he is not meant to cause Israel to perish, only to execute God's temporary judgement upon it. Ewald takes the other possible view, viz. that it is the Chaldean himself who is appointed to be judged and receive punishment. This view is less natural in the connexion.

and thou, O Rock, hast established him for correction] i.e. to be the instrument of chastising Israel. The term Rock is used of God, Deut. xxxii. 4, 18, 30, 31; 1 Sam. ii. 2; 2 Sam. xxii. 32, xxiii. 3; cf. Gen. xlix. 24, and the proper name Zurishaddai = "the Almighty is my rock," Numb. i. 6, ii. 12 &c.

13. *Thou that art of purer eyes*] lit. *O thou of pure eyes so as not* (to be able) *to see evil, and who canst not look upon wrongdoing.* Ps. v. 4, 5, "evil shall not sojourn with thee."

treacherously] Or, *ruthlessly*, tyrannically. Cf. Is. xxi. 2, xxiv. 16.

holdest thy peace...swalloweth up] Cf. Is. xlii. 14, "I have long time holden my peace, I have been still and refrained myself; now &c." Ps. l. 21.

14 the man that is more righteous than he; and makest men
as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have
15 no ruler over them? He taketh up all of them with the
angle, he catcheth them in his net, and gathereth them
16 in his drag: therefore he rejoiceth and is glad. Therefore
he sacrificeth unto his net, and burneth incense unto his

more righteous than he] The "wicked" is the Chaldean conqueror; the "righteous" is generalized to include the other nations, victims of the Chaldean barbarities, though Israel may be specially in the prophet's mind. But in *vv.* 12—17 the prophet speaks out of the heart of mankind (cf. Nahum, Introd., § 4). The anomaly is that the righteous God, whose nature cannot endure wrong, looks on and is silent over this wrong which is as large as the human race.

14. *and makest men*] **and hast made men**—the condition is one that has supervened. At the last resort it is Jehovah who is the author of all this inhuman violence. Cf. Job ix. 24, "if it be not he, who then is it?" It might be that the Chaldeans were set to chastise, but they exceeded all bounds in their inhumanity (Is. xlvii. 6, 7; Zech. i. 14, 15). Men under their cruel rapacity ceased to be men, the very humanity in them was disregarded, and the brutal conqueror in his pride treated them like the lower creatures.

creeping things] The term probably refers to the animals which live at the bottom of the sea (cf. Ps. civ. 25), rather than to land reptiles.

no ruler over them] This hardly means that the creeping things have no king to protect them, but rather that, as the lowest creatures that have life, they have no higher instincts, no organization, they are a mere swarming disorder, and to this condition do the conquerors reduce mankind. Prov. vi. 7, xxx. 27.

15. *He taketh up all of them*] Babylon is like some great receptacle into which all other nations are indiscriminately swept. The three terms "angle" (or hook), "net" and "drag" (or seine) are arranged in ascending order, the last being a large draw net which would sweep a considerable extent of sea.

therefore he rejoiceth] The Chaldean is compared to the fisher, who rejoices over the successful haul of his net. He drags men and nations indiscriminately into his power, and is dead to all their higher sensibilities and all that is human in them.

16. *he sacrificeth unto his net*] The figure of "net" and "drag" was suggested by the idea that men were reduced to the level of fishes and creeping things. The net represents the means and instruments employed by the conqueror, or that by which he subdues men. This might be more generally his prowess (*v.* 11), or more particularly his weapons. Herodotus (iv. 62) records that the Scythians offered a yearly sacrifice of sheep and horses to the

drag; because by them his portion is fat, and his meat
[1]plenteous. Shall he therefore empty his net, and not 17
spare to slay the nations continually?

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the 2
[2]tower, and will look forth to see what he will speak [3]with
me, and what I shall answer concerning my complaint.

[1] Heb. *fat.* [2] Or, *fortress* [3] Or, *by*

scimitar as the symbol of Mars. It may be doubted if the prophet had any knowledge of this or if his idea is so precise. The next clause "because by them his portion is fat" might suggest that his weapons were meant; but if so his "sacrificing" to them is probably not to be taken literally. He deifies his weapons, or, if *v.* 11 be followed, the might that wields them.

17. A despairing question and appeal to Heaven.

Shall he therefore empty his net] If the text is in order this must mean "Is he for ever to be emptying his net only to fill it again?" Giesebrecht with a slight emendation gets the sense "Shall he for ever draw his sword?", and he is followed by many scholars.

Ch. II.

1—4. Like a watchman the Prophet looks out for an answer from Heaven to his plea.

The prophet's plea or argument is finished. The plea is that expressed in i. 12—17. And like a watchman looking forth from his watch-tower he will look out to see what answer he shall receive to it from Heaven (*v.* 1). He is commanded to write the answer, when it is given, on tablets, that all may read it easily (*vv.* 2, 3). It comes in the shape of a moral distinction; "His soul is puffed up in him; but the righteous shall live by his faithfulness." The distinction carries in it its final verification in events, though this may not come at once (*v.* 4).

1. *stand upon my watch*] i.e. I will take my stand upon my place of watching (Is. xxi. 8; 2 Chr. vii. 6), parallel to "and set me on a tower." The language appears to be figurative; it is scarcely likely, though possible, that the prophet had some elevated place to which he retired to await a prophetic vision. But as a watchman looks out from his watch-tower into the distance (2 Sam. xviii. 24; 2 Kings ix. 17), the prophet will look out for the answer or message from Heaven (Is. xxi. 8, 11). All this introduction serves to emphasize the importance and solemnity of the divine oracle.

shall answer concerning my complaint] **what answer I shall bring to my plea.** His plea or argument is the whole scope of the preceding chapter, or at least of ch. i. 12—17. Comp. Job xiii. 6, "hear now my reasoning." Syr. reads: "what answer *he will give*," and so many scholars. The reading gives a closer parallel to the preceding clause, and is decidedly preferable. At the same time

2 And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision,
and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that
3 readeth it. For the vision is yet for the appointed time,
and it [1]hasteth toward the end, and shall not lie: though
it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will
4 not delay. Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not [2]upright

[1] Heb. *panteth.* [2] Or, *straight*

it is not absolutely necessary; comp. Judg. v. 29, "she answered (same term as here) her own words." In this case, the answer is an inner one which the prophet shall be enabled to make to himself and his plea, hence it is called a *vision* (*v.* 2).

2. *make it plain*] The same word in Deut. xxvii. 8.

upon tables] **upon the tablets**. The art. refers either to the customary use of such tablets for public notices (Is. viii. 1), or to the tablets to be taken in this case for the purpose.

he may run that readeth] The words explain the command to *make it plain*, and mean that the reader may run on in his reading without being hindered by any obscurity or unwontedness in the writing. German, *dass jeder sie geläufig lese*. Cf. Is. viii. 1, margin. The writer of the hymn "There is a book who runs may read" apparently misunderstood the expression.

3. Verse 3 further explains the reason both for writing the vision and for writing it plainly. The vision bears upon the future and must be preserved; also, it is of common interest to all, learned or unlearned, and the speedy understanding of it will quiet minds that are perplexed.

the appointed time] The vision bears upon the future determined *time*. Cf. Dan. viii. 19, 26, x. 14, xi. 27, 35.

and it hasteth toward the end] lit. *panteth*. The vision, as the word of God (Is. lv. 10, 11), has an energy and life of its own, and it strains toward the end, though the "end" here is not its own fulfilment, but the determined future time. 2 Pet. ii. 3.

and shall not lie] i.e. prove, or be found, false, deceive.

it will not delay] **will not fail**, or, **be late**, beyond the appointed time. 2 Sam. xx. 5; Judg. v. 28. There is in the mind of God a fixed date for the fulfilment of the vision, and that date will not be overpassed.

4. Verse 4 gives the contents of the vision. The present text reads:

> Behold his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him;
> But the righteous shall live by his faithfulness.

The term "puffed up" is perhaps properly said of ground, and means to be uneven, to have swelling heights, and, when applied to the mind, to swell, be puffed up or arrogant. The opposite idea is "upright," properly *even*, without ruggedness or heights (Is. xl. 3, 4). Cf. Prov. xxx. 32; Ps. cxxxi. 2.

in him: but the just shall live [1]by his faith. [2]Yea, moreover, wine is a treacherous dealer, a haughty man, and 5

[1] Or, *in his faithfulness*

[2] Or, *And also because his wine...he is a haughty man*

Instead of "is puffed up" the parallelism of the verse would naturally require a noun as subject, opposed to "the righteous" of next clause: *Behold the..., his soul is not upright in him, but the righteous* &c. Wellhausen suggests "Behold, the wicked" (*hāawwāl*), and this is to a certain extent supported by the Targ. and the Pesh. The LXX took the clause as a conditional, *if he draw back*; reading also "*my* soul" for "his soul," and "*my* faithfulness" for "his faithfulness."

The term "faithfulness" is used in the sense of physical steadiness or firmness, as Ex. xvii. 12 of the hands of Moses (cf. Is. xxxiii. 6); then in the sense of trueness, e.g. as opposed to falsehood or lies in speech, Jer. v. 3, vii. 28; and as equivalent to trustworthiness, honesty in conduct, 2 Kings xii. 15, 16. The word is often coupled with "righteousness," as 1 Sam. xxvi. 23; Is. lix. 4; Jer. v. 1. In Is. xi. 5 it is said of the Messiah: "righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and *faithfulness* the girdle of his reins." So far as the expression is used of men it appears to mean *integrity* of character and conduct, and differs little from righteousness. Such a character has in it the principle of permanence, while the Chaldean, whose soul is not upright in him, shall perish. Comp. Prov. x. 25, "when the whirlwind passeth, the wicked is no more, but the righteous is an everlasting foundation" (x. 2). The LXX renders the word by *pistis*, which in the O.T. nearly always means "faithfulness" rather than "faith," though St Paul reads into it his own theory of faith. The Heb. language has no word for "faith" as an active principle, though the term "believe" is derived from the same root as the present word[1]. The situation here is similar to that described in Is. viii. 16 f., "Bind up the testimony ...and I will wait for the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him"; cf. here *v.* 3, "though it tarry, wait for it."

6. *Yea, moreover, wine is a treacherous dealer*] The text is manifestly at fault. There seems no point in the mention of wine, and it finds no place in the LXX and Syr. Most scholars now see in the word a corruption of Ha! or Woe to! Marti, combining suggestions of Wellhausen and Oort, renders "Woe to the arrogant and treacherous!" An objection to an emendation of this kind is that it leaves the first two words (*wᵉaph kî*) unexplained, and scholars have no resource but to cut them out. If this emendation is accepted, the verse is the beginning of the five woes, rather than a transition as Davidson takes it. But there is force in G. A. Smith's remark that 6 *a* suggests that the taunt begins with

[1] See Lightfoot, *Ep. to the Galatians*, pp. 154—164.

[1]that keepeth not at home; who enlargeth his desire as
[2]hell, and he is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but
gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him

[1] Or, *he shall not abide* [2] Heb. *Sheol.*

6*b*. So possibly the true reading is "But yet the treacherous dealer is as nought." So Giesebrecht and Budde. Or we may emend to *wᵉphes yihyeh boged,* "and the treacherous dealer shall become nought." Cf. Is. xxxiv. 12, xli. 29 &c. The LXX is unintelligible. Syr. renders *an arrogant and greedy man is not satiated* (insatiable). The term rendered "treacherous dealer" is applied to the Chaldean in i. 13.

a haughty man, and that keepeth not at home] The term "haughty" occurs Prov. xxi. 24, "The proud and haughty man, scorner is his name." The verb "keepeth at home" is found nowhere else; a noun in the sense of *pasture, homestead,* is not uncommon, and the verb if it existed might (after Arab.) mean *to find a home,* or resting-place—possibly even *to be quiet* or *rest* (Job xx. 20). The whole would then read: *Yet the treacherous dealer is as nought; the man that is proud and resteth not; who enlargeth.* For "resteth not" (*yinweh*) Wellh. suggests "is not satisfied" (*yirweh*). The latter word properly means *to drink* to satiety, as the thirsty does water, and as the sword does blood (Jer. xlvi. 10). When Ibn Aḥmar sings of his camel: "She says, when I have raised the saddle upon her, Will Ibn Aḥmar be supplied with drink, and never satisfy his thirst (*yarwa*) from me?" the beast refers to her sweat.

If the word "wine" were retained a slight change in the Heb. text might produce a comparison: *Moreover, like wine is the treacherous dealer, a man that is proud and restless* (insatiable); *who enlargeth*:—the comparison "like wine" indicating the conduct and demeanour that wine produces.

enlargeth his desire as hell] **who openeth wide his maw like Sheôl.** Sheôl, the place of the dead, is insatiable. Is. v. 14; Prov. xxvii. 20, "Sheôl and Abaddon are never satisfied," cf. xxx. 16. "Death" like Sheôl is personified.

heapeth unto him all peôples] He swalloweth down all nations like Sheôl.

6—20. Five woes pronounced against the Chaldean from the mouth of the nations whom he has desolated.

A taunting proverb is taken up against the Chaldean by the nations. This proverb is in the form of a prophecy, in which woes are pronounced on the lust of conquest, rapacity, selfish pride, and idolatry of the people, and their ruin is predicted, for their vices carry in them their own recompense. The woes are five in number, beginning with verses 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18. Though the nations take up the woes, as the passage proceeds the prophet himself appears to speak.

all peoples. Shall not all these take up a parable against 6
him, and a taunting [1]proverb against him, and say, Woe
to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long?
and that ladeth himself with pledges! Shall they not rise 7
up suddenly that shall [2]bite thee, and awake that shall
[3]vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them?
Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant 8
of the peoples shall spoil thee; because of men's blood,

[1] Or, *riddle* [2] Or, *exact usury of thee*
[3] Or, *toss thee to and fro*

6—8. First woe: the Chaldean lust of conquest.

6. *Shall not all these*] i.e. all the nations whom he has drawn into his net, and heaped together as his own possession.

take up a parable] Rather, **taunt-song.** The word may mean originally a saying containing a comparison or similitude; in a wider sense, a figurative speech or song. Here as in Is. xiv. 4, Micah ii. 4 it is used of a lamentation or taunt. For the phrase "take up a parable" cf. Numb. xxiii. 7, 18; Job xxvii. 1.

taunting proverb against him] Or, **in regard to him**. *Taunting proverb* is lit. *an enigma, riddle.* The former word occurs in Judg. xiv. 12 &c.; Ps. xlix. 4; Dan. viii. 23, and both occur in Prov. i. 6. Both words suggest a song or poem with concealed taunting allusions.

increaseth that which is not his] The reference is to his insatiable lust of conquest and robbery of the nations.

that ladeth himself with pledges] That which he compels the nations to give him or takes from them by force is compared to pledges which he heaps up upon himself. The day will come when their restitution shall be exacted of him. Job xx. 10, 15, 20. The A.V. rendering "thick clay" is obtained by taking the word "pledges" as a compound; so Vulg. and Syr.: cf. Ex. xix. 9, *thick cloud.*

7. *that shall bite thee*] Such is the usual sense of the word, which is used of the serpent, Gen. xlix. 17; Numb. xxi. 8, 9; cf. Mic. iii. 5. The term is employed here in a figurative sense of the attack of enemies. In one form the verb means *to exact usury* from one, Deut. xxiii. 20, and some would render here *thy creditors*. This double sense is supposed by some to be one of the taunting allusions (*v.* 6).

vex thee] Or, **violently shake thee**. Eccles. xii. 3; Esth. v. 9; cf. Dan. v. 19, vi. 27; Deut. xxviii. 25; Is. xxviii. 19.

8. *remnant of the peoples*] The most natural meaning is, all the other peoples in contrast with the Chaldean: the nations shall make common cause against him, and spoil their spoiler. Others consider that reference is made to the desolating wars of the Chaldeans which have reduced the inhabitants of the world to a "remnant." This is less natural. Altogether unacceptable is the

and for the violence done to the land, to the city and to all that dwell therein.

9 Woe to him that getteth an evil gain for his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered
10 from the hand of evil! Thou hast consulted shame to thy house, by cutting off many peoples, and hast sinned

view that the remnant or rest of the nations are those nations whom the Chaldean *did not* spoil, for in *v.* 5 he is said to have gathered to him all nations.

violence done to the land] **to the earth**, Jer. l. 23, li. 7, 25. The term "city" is collective, "cities." Bloodshed of men, desolation of the earth, which also is sentient and moral (Is. xiv. 7, xlv. 18), and burning of cities—these are the things for which nemesis awaits the Chaldean. The like shall be done unto him—he shall be spoiled, his proud cities burned in the fire (*v.* 13), and his glory covered with shame (*v.* 16). This refrain recurs *v.* 17.

9—11. SECOND WOE: THE CHALDEAN'S RAPACITY AND SELF-AGGRANDISEMENT.

9. *for his house*] i.e. his family or dynasty, or, if the Chaldean represent the nation, his people.

set his nest on high] A figure from the eagle or other birds that build in inaccessible places. He sought evil gains for the purpose of fortifying his abode and making it unassailable. Numb. xxiv. 21; Jer. xlix. 16=Obad. 4.

hand of evil] i.e. calamity from assailants. The "evil" is not present, but eventual and possible.

10. *consulted shame to thy house*] The next words explain that what he consulted or purposed was to cut off many nations; but this purpose shall turn out to be to the confusion of his house; Jer. vii. 19. As the Assyrian was sent against an ungodly nation, so the Chaldean was appointed for chastisement, but neither of them understood the limits of his commission: "he meaneth not so,... but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few," Is. x. 7. "The result of a course of action is described ironically as its purpose. Hos. viii. 4, Is. xxx. 1, Jer. vii. 18, 19" (Driver). For the use of "consult" in its archaic sense of "plan" cf. Mic. vi. 5.

by cutting off many peoples] Or, *to cut off*. The text is not quite assured, the Versions render: *thou hast cut off*. Cf. 2 Kings x. 32.

and hast sinned] Or, **whilst thou sinnest against thine own life.** In his purpose to cut off many peoples, and in the execution of it, he sins to the endangering, or rather to the forfeiture of his own life. Comp. Is. x. 12—19, and particularly Is. xiv. 20. The construction and form of sentence are both unusual, cf. Prov. viii. 36, xx. 2, and Ps. vii. 10, lv. 20 (R.V. vii. 9, lv. 19).

against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, 11
and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.

Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and 12
stablisheth a city by iniquity! Behold, is it not of the 13
LORD of hosts that the peoples labour for the fire, and
the nations weary themselves for vanity? For the earth 14
shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
as the waters cover the sea.

11. *stone shall cry out of the wall*] **For the stone out of the wall shall cry out.** The Chaldean gains evil gains to build his nest on high; the materials he uses, the stones and wood, shall cry out against the wrong and oppression perpetrated in procuring them. This sense is preferable to that assumed by Hitzig, that in his constructions the Chaldean kept back the hire of the labourers (Jer. xxii. 13).

beam...answer it] i.e. re-echo its cry of injustice.

12—14. THIRD WOE: HIS OPPRESSION OF THE PEOPLES TO GRATIFY HIS ARCHITECTURAL PRIDE.

12. *buildeth a town with blood*] The meaning appears to be that the means of building the city are acquired through bloodshed, conquest and slaughter of the nations, and deportation of them to be employed in forced labour. Comp. Mic. iii. 10, "They build up Zion with blood," i.e. by the goods of those slain by judicial murder (1 Kings xxi.).

by iniquity] Cf. Jer. xxii. 13, where the iniquity consists in the forced labour; here it may be more general. The terms "town" and "city" refer to any city or to many. Is. xiv. 21.

13. *the peoples labour for the fire*] Those great cities of the heathen world on which the peoples labour are destined to become the prey of the fire.

the nations weary themselves for vanity] i.e. in vain. The great buildings on whose construction the nations exhaust themselves are doomed to annihilation. This is the decree of the Lord of Hosts. The words with some difference occur again, Jer. li. 58, with special reference to Babylon. The passage is scarcely a quotation from Jer., neither do the words, *Behold, is it not* &c., imply that it is a quotation from some other source. Cf. 2 Chron. xxv. 26, where the peculiar phrase occurs again.

14. *as the waters cover*] Or, **like the waters which cover the** (bed of the) **sea.** The knowledge shall be not only universal but deep. The words are taken from Is. xi. 9 with the addition of *of the glory* of the Lord. Marti suggests that there is here a reminiscence of Is. v. 3. It is a common thought in later writers that the glory of the Lord is specially revealed in the annihilation of

15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that
[1]addest thy [2]venom *thereto*, and makest him drunken also,
16 that thou mayest look on their nakedness! Thou art
filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and [3]be as

[1] Or, *pourest* [2] Or, *fury*
[3] Or, *let thy foreskin be uncovered*

the heathen, cf. Is. lxvi. 18, 19; Ezek. xxviii. 22. The verse explains the preceding. The Lord of Hosts, God Omnipotent, whose purposes overrule all, shall bring in His kingdom, and in the judgements that precede its coming the great fabrics reared by heathenism for its idolatries and its oppressions shall become fuel for the fire (Is. ix. 5). Or, as Driver puts it, "the civilizations of heathendom will perish, for something better will take their place." This is the line of thought most natural. Another might be that when the reign of peace in Jehovah's kingdom shall come in, men themselves shall burn to the ground their strongholds of war and their edifices of pride, just as they shall beat their swords to ploughshares (Is. ii. 4).

15–17. Fourth woe: his contemptuous humiliation of prostrate potentates and nations.

15. The helplessness of the nations before the power or the craft of the Chaldean, and his contemptuous treatment of them when subject to him, is represented under the figure of giving one to drink to intoxication, and then making brutal merriment over the exposure of his nakedness (Gen. ix. 21).

that addest thy venom thereto] The word translated "venom" bears this meaning in Deut. xxxii. 24, 33. In Nah. i. 6 it means "fury" (cf. marg.). The A.V. rendering "bottle" (Gen. xxi. 14) represents a similar Hebrew word which might be read if the vowel points were altered, but its use is quite improbable. The ancient "bottle," being a wine-skin, would not suggest the figure. Wellhausen makes the ingenious conjecture that the word rendered "mixing," or adding to, has arisen by accidental repetition of a letter, and that its true sense is "from the cup" (Zech. xii. 2)—"Woe to him that giveth his neighbour drink from the cup of his (lit. thy) wrath, and maketh him drunken also."

16. *filled with shame for glory*] **with shame and not with glory,** the construction as Hos. vi. 6, "mercy and not sacrifices," cf. Ps. lii. 3. The term "art filled" or sated must have the meaning: "thou hast feasted thyself on shame," i.e. on the shame of his victims, or more generally, on that which is shameful, rather than on what is decorous and honourable. Such a sense seems nowhere

one uncircumcised: the cup of the LORD's right hand shall be turned unto thee, and foul shame shall be upon thy glory. For the violence done to Lebanon shall cover thee, 17
and the destruction of the beasts, [1]which made them afraid; because of men's blood, and for the violence done to the land, to the city and to all that dwell therein.

[1] According to many ancient versions, *shall make thee afraid.*

else expressed by the verb "to be sated." The text may be uncertain.

and be as one uncircumcised] The verb is not elsewhere found, and most scholars accept Wellhausen's emendation (which merely involves the transposition of two letters) "and reel." Cf. Zech. xii. 2, "a cup of reeling"; Is. li. 17, 22. This is supported by the LXX and gives a good sense, but the text is not impossibly original.

cup...turned unto thee] Cf. Lam. iv. 21; Jer. xxv. 15, li. 7; Is. li. 17.

foul shame] The word, like that rendered by the A.V. "thick clay" (*v.* 6), is taken in the A.V. as two words: *spuing of shame.* It is no doubt an intensive form of the word *shame.*

17. *violence done to Lebanon*] lit. violence of Lebanon. Lebanon is not a figure for the holy land, but used literally. We know from the Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser, Esarhaddon, Assurbanipal and Nebuchadnezzar that both Assyrians and Babylonians transported wood from Lebanon for their temples and other edifices. Inasmuch as the cedar wood was specially connected with the building of Solomon's Temple, perhaps the use of the cedars by the Chaldean in any form may have been considered desecration. Comp. Is. xiv. 8.

shall cover thee] Cf. Obad. 10; Jer. iii. 25. In Obad. 10 shame covers the Edomites because of the violence; here the violence itself covers. The violence carries shame, its recompense, in itself.

the destruction...made them afraid] **and the destruction of the beasts shall terrify thee** (or, break thee). The ancient Versions read *thee* for *them*, no doubt rightly. The Chaldeans may have made Lebanon their hunting-ground, and possibly they carried the chase to excess. The earth, the woods, and the beasts, no less than man, have rights; there is nothing that exists which is not moral; wanton excess on anything recoils on the head of the perpetrator. The ravage and terror carried into the world of creatures shall come back in terror and destruction on the Chaldean. The refrain is as in *v.* 11. For Lebanon as the haunt of beasts cf. Is. xl. 16.

18 What profiteth the graven image, that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and the teacher of lies, that the maker of [1]his work trusteth therein, to make
19 dumb idols? Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise! Shall this teach? Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is
20 no breath at all in the midst of it. But the LORD is in his holy temple: [2]let all the earth keep silence before him.

[1] Or, *its* [2] Heb. *be silent before him, all the earth.*

18—20. FIFTH WOE: THE IRRATIONAL IDOLATRIES OF THE CHALDEAN. Is. xix. 1, xxi. 9.

18 *What profiteth the graven image...?*] The idea that the idols do not profit, i.e. save or deliver, is often expressed; 1 Sam. xii. 21; Is. xliv. 10; Jer. ii. 8, 11, xvi. 19. Cf. Is. xlvi.; Jer. x.

and the teacher of lies] Here the "teacher" is the idol itself, not its priest or prophet as in Is. ix. 15, because the priest or prophet only expressed the indications or intimations given by the god. These intimations are called "lies," Zech. x. 2. The term teacher occurs in the name Oak *Moreh* (Gen. xii. 6), which was probably a "talking oak," in which a deity resided and from which (whether through its rustling or otherwise, cf. 2 Sam. v. 24) oracles were drawn. Deut. xi. 30; cf. Judg. ix. 37, the oak of the Meonenim (augurs).

dumb idols] Cf. 1 Cor. xii. 2, and for the general idea of the ineffectiveness of the idols Ps. cxv. 4—8.

19. *Woe unto him...Awake*] Cf. 1 Kings xviii. 27, "he (Baal) sleepeth, and must be awaked." The term is also used of Jehovah when He visibly interposes after apparent inactivity, Ps. lxxviii. 65, xxxv. 23, xliv. 23, lix. 5. As this verse begins with *Woe*, many propose to place it before *v.* 18.

Shall this teach?] An exclamation of contempt or wonder at the infatuation of those who consult it. *Teach* is equivalent to "give an answer or oracle when consulted or appealed to." Is. xli. 26, xlvi. 7.

laid over with gold] This is probably the meaning, though the term is obscure. Perhaps: *set in* gold.

there is no breath] Cf. Ps. cxxxv. 17; Jer. x. 14, cf. li. 17.

20. The verse expresses the contrast between the idols and Jehovah. Is. xlvi.

holy temple] i.e. the heavenly temple, as in Ps. xi. 4. And "he who sitteth in heaven" is living and all powerful, watchful of the affairs of men (Ps. xi. 4), into which He may throw Himself at any moment (Ps. ii. 12).

let all the earth keep silence] The expression occurs again Zeph.

i. 7; Zech. ii. 13. In the former passage reference is to the manifestation of Jehovah in "the day of the Lord," the final judgement upon the earth, and in the other a similar idea appears to be expressed. The sense of the present passage is probably the same: the *silence* is that of expectancy and dread before the revelation of the Lord. The word "keep silence" is properly an exclamation, "Silence!", as in Amos vi. 10, "Hold thy peace." So here perhaps the marg. is more correct. The verse may serve as a transition to ch. iii.

Ch. III.

Ch. iii. is a brilliant description of a Theophany or manifestation of Jehovah for the redemption of His people. The dark background of Israel's redemption is formed by the destruction of its enemies. The poem is based on earlier models, such as Deut. xxxiii., Judg. v., and it is not easy to say whether the poet is describing a future Theophany and deliverance in colours drawn from the great historical redemption of the Exodus, or actually describing the first deliverance as the type of that which is future, and for which he prays (iii. 2). In *v.* 2 occurs the expression *I have heard the report of thee*; and according to the usage of the language *report of thee* refers to God's "work," His great deeds done in the past, or to what these past deeds reveal Him to be (Numb. xiv. 15). Then the poet prays "renew thy work," that is, renew or repeat in our days the great deeds of old, or, manifest Thyself again as in the ancient days. So far as the interpretation of *vv.* 3—15 is concerned, it will be little affected whether these verses be considered to describe the past "work," or to refer to the future one. In the one case the poet would pray: "renew thy work," and then go on to describe in *vv.* 3—15 that ancient work which he desired to see renewed; in the other he would pray: "renew thy work," and then proceed to describe the renewed work, which was but a repetition of the ancient one. Verses 13—15 are most naturally to be taken as historical, particularly *v.* 15, "thou didst tread the sea with thy horses," which appears to refer to the passage of the Red Sea, the last act in the great work of delivering His people and destroying their adversaries. On the other hand many have taken the last part of *v.* 16 to express a foreboding of something to come. The clause is very obscure in sense, and the text may not be quite assured. But the whole passage is a *prayer*. The poet prays for the renewal of God's past "work" in the future, though he cannot think of that "work" without alarm. Upon the whole it is easiest to read *vv.* 3—15 as a delineation of the historical "work" of God at the Exodus. And besides being easiest, this way of reading the passage is most in harmony with other passages, e.g. Deut. xxxiii.; Ps. lxviii. 7, lxxvii. 15 ff. Judg. v. may be doubtful, but in the age of Habakkuk and later Jehovah would hardly be represented as shining forth anew from

3 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, set to Shigionoth.

2 O LORD, I have heard [1]the report of thee, and [2]am afraid:
O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years,

[1] Or, *thy fame* [2] Or, *was*

Sinai, but rather from Jerusalem (Am. i. 2; Is. lxvi. 6; Ps. lxxx. 1), or from heaven (Zech. ii. 13).

1, 2. INTRODUCTION.

1. *A prayer of Habakkuk*] The only part of the passage which is strictly prayer is *v.* 2. But the whole poem is nothing but an amplification of the words "renew thy work." The earnest direction of the poet's mind towards God, and its absorption and loss of itself in the thought of Him and His operations are a prayer. For this wider idea of prayer cf. 1 Sam. ii. 1; Ps. lxxii. 20. Comp. the title to Ps. xc.

set to Shigionoth] The word is plur. of Shiggaion which occurs in the title of Ps. vii., and may mean a wild, tumultuous, and ecstatic poem. The root means "wander," "go astray" either literally or morally. In the phrase "set to Shigionoth" the meaning apparently is that the words are set to irregular music. The expression is not paralleled, but there is no justification for altering it to "upon the stringed instruments." The LXX renders "with a song," apparently finding the same word here as that rendered "stringed instruments" in *v.* 19.

2. *I have heard the report of thee*] The term appears always to express the report or bruit about one, e.g. Gen. xxix. 13 the news about Jacob, 1 Kings x. 1 about Solomon, Is. xxiii. 5 about Tyre (her downfall); comp. Numb. xiv. 15; Is. lxvi. 19; Nah. iii. 19. It seems also always to refer to something past and actual (unless Hos. vii. 12 be an exception); and this suggests that the allusion is to the divine manifestation at the Exodus. Cf. Ps. xliv. 1.

and am afraid] Of course the prophet or the community in whose name he speaks (cf. *v.* 14) did not fear hurt from the Theophany so long past, but the recital or the thought of it created awe and dread. Cf. Ex. xiv. 30, 31. The root is the same as in the common phrase "the great and *terrible* God." Marti, however, suggests that the verb has come in from a recollection of *v.* 16, and that the meaning is rather "Lord, I have heard of thee, Lord, I have *seen* thy work; in the midst of the years dost thou reveal thyself, in wrath thinkest upon mercy."

revive thy work] Though filled with awe at the thought of the divine interposition, the prophet nevertheless prays for it. The term "revive" might mean to recall or bring back to life that which is dead (Hos. vi. 2), or to call into life and being what does not yet exist (Deut. xxxii. 39; 1 Sam. ii. 6). The "work" of

In the midst of the years make it known;
In wrath remember mercy.

Jehovah is that which He does, any operation which He performs, ch. i. 5; but the word is often used of His great historical acts done for His people, Ps. xliv. 1, xcv. 9; Deut. xi. 7; Jud. ii. 7. The sense is thus either: bring into being a great act of Thine; or, renew, recall into life again, Thy former great work of redemption. The second sense is the more natural, and most in harmony with the following phrase "in the midst of the years."

In the midst of the years] This cannot mean "within a few years" (Gesen.), a sense ill-suited to the tone of importunity in the passage; nor "amidst the years of distress," because the idea of distress must have been expressed. The expression must describe the poet's own time, for his prayer is for immediate divine interposition. Looking back to the far past event of the Exodus, the many years that have rolled by since then, he conceives of the position of himself and his people as amidst the years, as though the world had then run half its course.

midst of the years make it known] i.e. at this late time in our history make thy work known. The LXX has the curious rendering "In the midst of two beasts thou shalt be known, when the years draw nigh thou shalt be recognized." The Hebrew can be made without much alteration to give this sense, but it has no claim to be preferred. The interest of the rendering lies in the fact that the passage was supposed by some early Christian writers to be a prophecy of Christ lying in the manger between an ox and an ass. The first definite allusion to this is apparently found in a 5th century apocryphal Gospel, called the Gospel of Matthew.

In wrath remember mercy] The "wrath" might be that lying on the people now; but it is more natural to understand it of the wrath which the Judge will manifest when He intervenes among men. Comp. Is. xxvi. 20, "Come, O my people, enter into thy chambers, hide thyself for a little moment until the indignation be overpast." At the thought or the recital of God's interposition in the past—type of every interposition of His—the poet trembled; yet he would encounter it for the sake of that which will come after it, and he prays that it may come again; then he prays that in that day of universal wrath he and his people may have mercy shewn them. Rev. iii. 10. G. A. Smith prefers the rendering "turmoil" for "wrath." See also Additional Note, p. 99.

3—15. The revelation of Jehovah.

The passage has three strophes of 5, 4, 4 verses respectively. (1) Description of the Theophany, *vv.* 3—7. (2) The question, what is its meaning? *vv.* 8—11. (3) Statement of its meaning—it is to save His people, *vv.* 12—15.

3 God [1]came from Teman,
And the Holy One from mount Paran. [Selah
His glory covered the heavens,
And the earth was full of his praise.

[1] Or, *cometh*

3—7. Approach and manifestation of Jehovah in the storm.

The Theophany is pictured as a great tempest in the heavens in the midst of which God is present. It comes from the south, the region of Paran and Sinai (*v.* 3 *a*); there is a terrible splendour around the advancing God, which lightens the heavens and the earth (*vv.* 3 *b*, 4); pestilence and fever-glow follow in His wake (*v.* 5); all nature shudders, the eternal hills sink down (*v.* 6); the nations and tribes in the desert are dismayed (*v.* 7).

3. *God came from Teman*] Or, **cometh**. The verbs throughout may be in the past tense if the reference is to a Theophany of old, or in the present if the poet feels himself in the presence of the manifestation. The former seems on the whole preferable. Teman is a district lying in the north-west of Edom; cf. Ezek. xxv. 13; Obad. 9.

the Holy One from mount Paran] Or, **the mountains** (hill country) **of Paran**. The "Holy One" is virtually already a proper name (without the art.), as Is. xl. 25. Paran is the elevated region lying between the wilderness of Kadesh on the north and that of Sinai on the south, west of the Arabah. If any particular mountain be referred to it may be Jebel Mukrah, which has a height of 2000 feet, and forms the southern boundary of the plateau. At present the region is the seat of the Azazimeh Arabs. The whole region of Sinai, Paran, and Edom is regarded as the scene of the divine manifestation; comp. Deut. xxxiii. 2; Judg. v. 4.

Selah] The word, which occurs twice again in this chapter (*vv.* 9, 13) and elsewhere only in the Psalms (71 times), is of uncertain derivation and meaning. It has been explained as an abbreviation of three words in the sense of "Repeat," and it has been connected with verbs meaning "to rest" (pause) or "lift up." The last is the most probable. The word would then be a direction to strike up the music, or perhaps to play more loudly. The LXX regularly renders it "an interlude," a word that occurs also twice in the Psalms of Solomon. Jerome translates it "for ever."

His glory covered] The "glory" is the splendour of the divine majesty, which overspreads the heavens. Ps. viii. 1, cxlviii. 13.

was full of his praise] The term "praise" has a secondary meaning, viz. that in God which evokes praise or adoration. The meaning is not that praises from men's mouth filled the earth, but that the light of God's glory filled it, just as it overspread the heavens. Is. vi. 3.

And *his* brightness was as the light;
He had [1]rays *coming forth* [2]from his hand:
And there was the hiding of his power.
Before him went the pestilence,
And [3]fiery bolts went forth at his feet.
He stood, and [4]measured the earth;

[1] Heb. *horns.*
[2] Or, *at his side*
[3] Or, *burning coals*
[4] Or, *shook*

4. his *brightness was as the light*] **And there was a brightness like the sun**—Job xxxi. 26; Prov. iv. 18. Attention is drawn away from the general splendour which overspread the heavens and filled the earth, and concentrated upon the central point of the appearance, which was (appeared as) a brightness like the sun.

He had rays coming forth *from his hand*] Or, **at his side.** The rays of the sun are compared to *horns* in the East; in Ex. xxxiv. 29, 30, 35 the verb is used of the face of Moses which shot out rays. Michelangelo in his statue of Moses, following the Vg. rendering *ignorabat quia cornuta esset facies eius,* has represented the horns literally. The rays are probably lightning flashes. The rendering *at his side* is more probable than the literal *out of his hand.* So probably Deut. xxxiii. 2, "*at* his right hand was a burning fire" (not as R.V. "a fiery law"); the "*rubente dextera* jaculatus" is less likely in Hebrew. Of course "at his side" means at each side, cf. Ps. l. 3.

there was the hiding] **there was the hiding-place** of His power, i.e. omnipotence, or, the specially divine in the manifestation.

5. *went the pestilence*] God is represented as a mighty warrior attended by His servants. Before Him goes Pestilence, behind Him Fever and Disease.

fiery bolts went forth] **and burning plague went forth at his feet,** i.e. behind Him. The word again in this sense Deut. xxxii. 24.

6. *stood, and measured*] "Measured" could only mean surveyed, measured with His eyes, and this might be supposed taken up again in "he looked" of next clause; but the parallelism with the next clause rather requires that the effect of His standing or taking His stand should be stated. Possibly the word "measured" has the sense of a similar word used Is. xxiv. 19, *he made the earth to rock.* The LXX renders in the pass., *the earth was shaken.* Or we may with Wellhausen make a slight alteration and read "he made the earth to melt." Cf. Amos ix. 5. The preceding verses describe the Theophany as seen in heaven, it has not yet touched the earth, though its baleful accompaniments of pestilence and fever-glow are spoken of. Now the tempest in which the Deity is shrouded descends and touches the earth, enfolding the heights within it. "He stood" means *He took His stand,* He set His foot;

He beheld, and drove asunder the nations:
And the eternal mountains were scattered,
The everlasting hills did bow;
[1]His goings were *as* of old.
7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction:

[1] Or, *His ways are everlasting*

2 Sam. xx. 4; Is. l. 8; Ezek. xxii. 30. The earth felt His tread and rocked, Mic. i. 3, 4. Or, "stood" might describe an apparent stationariness of the storm-cloud during which it discharged itself, making the earth rock. Cf. Ps. xxix. 4, 5.

He beheld, and drove asunder] He looked, and His look scared the nations into violent commotion. The term means "to make one spring up from terror," Job xxxvii. 1.

mountains were scattered] Or, **did cleave asunder**. The sense is scarcely that the hills were scattered from one another, rather that the individual mountains were cleft. Cf. Zech. xiv. 4, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, toward the east and toward the west."

The everlasting hills did bow] Cf. Gen. xlix. 26; Deut. xxxiii. 15. Their bowing refers to the sinking and rising motion, as in an earthquake, under the feet of Jehovah in the tempest.

His goings were as *of old*] If this sense is adopted, it would decide that the previous description referred to a Theophany about to appear, which is compared to the former historical one, the term "goings" being equivalent to *way*. The term "goings" however might be in apposition to "eternal hills," and the meaning be that these hills were Jehovah's eternal pathways—the trailing tempests, in which Jehovah moves, are seen passing over the mountains, and thus these are considered the pathways of the Lord. Cf. Am. iv. 13, "he treadeth upon the high places of the earth"; Mic. i. 3. G. A. Smith translates "These be His ways from of old." "So rendered" he says "it sums up and clenches the theophany from ver. 3 onwards; and a new strophe now begins."

The section may be translated as follows:

He took his stand, and made the earth to quake,
He looked, and caused the nations to tremble;
And the everlasting hills were cleft asunder,
The eternal hills did bow;
Even his pathways from of old.

But the last line overloads the parallelism, and G. A. Smith's rendering is not improbably right.

7. *tents of Cushan*] Cushan here cannot be Cush=Ethiopia. In Numb. xii. 1 it is said that Moses had married a Cushite wife, though she was a Midianite; and in the next clause here Midian

The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.
Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? 8
Was thine anger against the rivers,
Or thy wrath against the sea,
That thou didst ride upon thine horses,
Upon thy chariots of salvation?
Thy bow was made quite bare; 9

is parallel to Cushan (cf. the name Lotan for Lot, Gen. xxxvi. 29). Cushan and Midian consequently are either names for the same people, or for branches of it. This people dwelt in the neighbourhood of Sinai. Mention of the ancient Cushan and Midian suggests that it is the Theophany of the Exodus that the poet is describing, though perhaps the inference is not conclusive, as he might suppose the ancient conditions still existing in his day, or even of purpose use archaic names.

The curtains] i.e. the tent hangings. Cf. Is. liv. 2; Jer. iv. 20, x. 20.

8—11. IS JEHOVAH'S ANGER AGAINST THE RIVERS AND THE SEA?

The reference to the "sea," which is naturally to be understood as the Red Sea, is in favour of taking the whole passage as a description of the redemption of the Exodus. Jehovah moves in a glorious manifestation of light from His ancient seats in Paran and Sinai; He directs His movement towards the Red Sea for the delivery of His people. Sea and land are thrown into wild commotion and terror at His appearing. This suggests the prophet's question, *Is thine anger against the sea?*

8. *Was the LORD displeased...?*] Perhaps strictly this must be rendered: **Wast thou displeased, O Lord?** lit. *was it hot to thee?* or, *was thine anger hot?*

against the rivers] Grätz, by the omission of one letter, reads "against the mountains," and this is accepted by G. A. Smith and Driver. There would then be a close parallel in Ps. cxiv. 3, 4, "The sea saw it and fled; Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams, the little hills like young sheep."

chariots of salvation] Or, *of victory*, deliverance; lit. *thy chariots* which are *victory*, i.e. victorious, used to victory. Or "victory" may be a kind of adverbial acc.: "thou didst ride...victoriously." The "horses" and "chariots" here are the storm-clouds on which Jehovah rides. Ps. xviii. 10; Is. xix. 1; Deut. xxxiii. 26; Ps. lxviii. 33.

9. *Thy bow was made quite bare*] The "bow" is the battle-bow, perhaps suggested by the rainbow. Cf. Gen. ix. 13. It is bared of

[1]The oaths to the tribes were a *sure* word. [Selah
Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.
10 The mountains saw thee, and [2]were afraid;
The tempest of waters passed by:
The deep uttered his voice,
And lifted up his hands on high.

[1] Or, *Sworn were the chastisements* (Heb. *rods*) *of* thy *word*
[2] Or, *were in pain*

its covering in order to be freely used, and to discharge its arrows —a figure for the flashing thunderbolts, or for the missiles with which Jehovah smites the rivers and the sea.

The oaths to the tribes were a sure *word*] The three Hebrew words thus rendered form a puzzle which has long exercised the ingenuity of scholars, and no certainty as to their meaning has been attained. As they stand they are untranslatable, nor do the Versions render much help. The Barberini text of the LXX is most hopeful. Its rendering is "Thou didst sate the shafts of his quiver." There is, however, nothing in the Hebrew text to correspond with "quiver." It would entail no violent alteration of the text to read "Thou didst sate the rods of thine anger" (*'appéka* for *'omer*), and this would yield a tolerable sense. For the rod of divine punishment cf. Is. xxx. 32. But see Thackeray's ingenious explanation of the passage, Additional Note, p. 99.

Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers] The language certainly admits of this sense, but the connexion seems rather to require: **thou didst cleave the rivers** (or, water-currents) **into dry land.** Both the words "rivers" and "earth" are in the accus.; and only the connexion can shew which is the direct object and which the more remote (accus. of result). The reference would be to the passage of the Red Sea and the Jordan.

10. *The mountains saw thee &c.*] **The mountains saw thee, they trembled.**

The tempest of waters] **the rainflood of waters passeth** (driveth) **along**. Ch. i. 11; the reference is to a rainstorm.

The deep uttered] The "deep" (*tehōm*, Assyr. *tiamat*) is properly the primal ocean, subterranean source of the visible sea, but here the latter itself. The reference is probably to the Red Sea; Ps. cvi. 9, "he led them through the depths"; so Is. lxiii. 13. The roaring of the troubled and smitten sea is described.

lifted up his hands] The reference appears to be to the mounting heavenwards of the waves. It is doubtful, however, if uttering its voice and lifting up its hands are meant to express an appeal

The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; 11
At the light of thine arrows as they went,
At the shining of thy glittering spear.
Thou didst march through the land in indignation, 12
Thou didst thresh the nations in anger.

on the part of the sea for mercy (Ew.). Comp. Ps. lxxvii. 16. Marti and others transpose this last clause to the next verse, and with some alteration partially supported by the LXX, gain the sense, "The sun forgets its rising, the moon stays still in its habitation."

11. *The sun and moon stood still*] i.e. did not come forth, being behind the storm-cloud. The word possibly means *retreated*, withdrew into their habitation, hiding themselves from the light of the flying arrows of Jehovah. They were scared and outshone by the terrible brightness of His lightnings; cf. Is. xxiv. 23.

At the light of thine arrows as they went] The "arrows" and "spear" both refer to the lightnings.

The strophe reads as a whole:

8. Wast thou displeased against the rivers, O Lord?
Was thine anger against the rivers,
Or thy wrath against the sea,
That thou didst ride upon thine horses,
Upon thy chariots of salvation?
9. Thy bow was made bare.
. . . . . Selah.
Thou cleavedst the rivers into dry land.
10. The mountains saw thee, they trembled,
The rainflood of waters passed on;
The deep uttered his voice,
And lifted up his hands on high.
11. The sun, the moon stood still in their habitation,
At the light of thine arrows as they went,
At the shining of thy glittering spear.

12—15. The Lord is come forth for the salvation of His people.

The former verses have described the Theophany in itself and in its effects upon nature; now the outpouring of Jehovah's indignation on the foes of His people is described.

12. *Thou didst march*] As in former times "threshing" was performed by treading (Deut. xxv. 4), the sense is: *thou didst tread down*; 2 Kings xiii. 7; Job xxxix. 15, comp. the figures Is. lxiii. 1—6. The term "march" means to take great steps, *to stride*.

13 Thou [1]wentest forth for the salvation of thy people,
[2]For the salvation of thine anointed;
[3]Thou [4]woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked,
Laying bare the foundation even unto the neck. [Selah
14 Thou [5]didst pierce with his own staves the head of his
[6]warriors:

[1] Or, *art come*
[2] Or, *For salvation* (or *victory*) *with thine anointed*
[3] Or, *Thou didst smite off the head from the house &c.*
[4] Or, *hast wounded* [5] Or, *hast pierced*
[6] Or, *hordes* Or, *villages*

13. *For the salvation of thine anointed*] The term "anointed" was used properly of the king (1 Sam. xxiv. 6), or of the priest (1 Sam. ii. 35), but in later times it was employed more generally, e.g. of the Patriarchs (Ps. cv. 15), or of Cyrus (Is. xlv. 1), and here it appears to designate the people, according to the parallelism with the preceding clause. Comp. Ps. lxxxix. 38, 51. In Is. lv. 3–5 the promises made to David are represented as being inherited by the people. Marti's contention that the application of the title "anointed" to the people of Israel is not proved, and that it must refer to the reigning king or prince, does not seem to be justified.

Thou woundedst the head] **thou didst shatter**, or as marg. **thou hast smitten off the head from the house.**

Laying bare the foundation] The "wicked" is the heathen foe of Israel; if the Theophany of the Exodus be described, he is either the nation of the Egyptians or Pharaoh. This foe is compared to a house the top of which is smitten away from it, so that it falls to pieces and the foundation is laid bare. Comp. Am. ix. 1, "Smite the chapiters, that the thresholds may shake: and break them in pieces on the head of all of them."

unto the neck] The phrase to discover or lay bare the foundations means to destroy utterly and throw down the structure raised upon the foundations so that these appear (Mic. i. 6). Hence in Ps. cxxxvii. 7 it is said, "Lay bare even unto the foundation." This suggests that "lay bare" was used in the general sense of destroy, *raze* (as A.V.). In the present passage the "head" was said to be shattered away from the house, and in this clause it is added that the house from foundation to "neck," i.e. up to the shattered head, was rased. Possibly "rase unto the neck" was a proverbial expression, meaning to rase utterly. Baethgen (*Psalmen*, p. 414) proposes to read *rock* (a somewhat similar word) for "neck"—the foundation unto the rock. So Cheyne and Kirkpatrick.

14. *Thou didst pierce &c.*] **Thou didst pierce through with**

They came as a whirlwind to scatter me:
Their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly.
Thou [1]didst tread the sea with thine horses, 15
The [2]heap of mighty waters.

[1] Or, *hast trodden* [2] Or, *surge*

thy spears the head of his warriors. The Heb. text reads *his* spears or staves, which would mean that the weapons of the enemy were turned against himself. But though the idea is not uncommon (Ezek. xxxviii. 21; Zech. xiv. 13; cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 20) that the enemies of God's people shall be thrown into a panic and mutually destroy each other, there is nothing in the present passage to suggest that idea. The word rendered *warriors* as in Vulgate (marg. and A.V. *villages*) does not bear this meaning elsewhere. The LXX and Syr. have *princes*. The word generally means either "open country" (cf. Zech. ii. 4) or "villages" (cf. Deut. iii. 5).

They came as a whirlwind] **which were come out as a whirlwind**.

Their rejoicing was] **exulting as about to devour the afflicted in secret places**; lit. *their exulting was as to devour*. The figure is taken from the wild beast who devours his prey in his covert (Ps. x. 7–9, xvii. 12). The enemy exulted or raised a cry of exultation, feeling that their prey, the afflicted, that is the people Israel, was within their grasp. Comp. Ex. xiv. 3, xv. 9, "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them."

15. *Thou didst tread the sea*] **Thou didst go through the sea** (Is. xi. 15). The verse refers to the passage of the Red Sea; and the thought remains unexpressed, though it is understood, that with this was completed the destruction of the enemy and the deliverance of the people. Several scholars feel that the verse is out of place here, and that it would come better after *v.* 7. The strophe reads as a whole:

12. In indignation thou didst march through the earth,
    Thou didst thresh the nations in anger.
13. Thou camest forth for the salvation of thy people,
    For the salvation of thine anointed.
    Thou didst shatter the head from the house of the wicked,
    Laying bare the foundation unto the neck.
14. Thou didst pierce through with thy spears the head of his warriors,
    Which were come out as a whirlwind to scatter me,
    Exulting as about to devour the afflicted in secret places.
15. Thou didst go through the sea with thy horses,
    The heap of great waters.

16 I heard, and my belly trembled,
My lips quivered at the voice;
Rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in my place:
That I should rest [1]in the day of trouble,
[2]When it cometh up against the people [3]which invadeth him in troops.

[1] Or, waiting *for* [2] Or, *When he that shall invade them in troops cometh up against the people* [3] Or, *to invade them*

16. Verse 16 returns to *v.* 2, taking up the words "I heard the report of thee" and "I feared."

My lips quivered at the voice] i.e. the report or voice which he heard. The verb is used elsewhere of the tingling of the ears (1 Sam. iii. 11 &c.).

Rottenness entered] "Rottenness" is a figure for utter failure of strength.

I trembled in my place] Or, where I stood. 2 Sam. ii. 23.

That I should rest in the day of trouble] The words on to the end of the verse are very obscure. The first half of the verse describes the terror and paralysis that came upon the poet (or community) from what he "heard"; there appears little connexion between this idea and the rest of the verse. The R.V. text *that I should rest* appears to mean that I *must rest* or remain quiet in the day of trouble, i.e. probably, endure patiently the day of trouble. The marg. suggests: *that I should rest* waiting *for the day of trouble*, i.e. wait patiently for (or unto) the day of trouble. The term *rest* has nowhere else such a sense. The suggestion followed by Wellhausen, Marti, and others is worth noting. They would read the relative "that" as a noun, "my steps," and joining this to the preceding clause, they would render "my steps tremble where I stand; (but) I shall find rest in the day of trouble, when the people that troopeth upon me cometh up." It would be a slighter emendation to read "Blessed is he who can rest in the day of trouble, when it cometh up to a people that troopeth upon him." This would well express the central teaching of the book that steadfastness and trustfulness in the face of trouble will finally have its reward, and at the same time would give point to *For* at the beginning of the next verse. For the verb "troop" cf. Gen. xlix. 19.

When it cometh up against the people] The words might possibly mean: the day of trouble, *which is to come up against the people, to invade them* (like a troop). The "people," however, probably refers to the unnamed invaders. The *day of trouble* is a day resembling that of which the speaker has "heard" (*vv.* 3—15), the report of which makes his lips tremble, and such a day

For though the fig tree shall not blossom, 17
Neither shall fruit be in the vines;
The labour of the olive shall fail,
And the fields shall yield no meat;
The flock shall be cut off from the fold,
And there shall be no herd in the stalls:

need not necessarily be a time of calamity to come on Israel from any invader, it may be the day of general judgement and of the divine Theophany prayed for in ch. iii. 2. For this reason the other marginal suggestion of R.V. is not probable: "the day of trouble, *when he that shall invade them in troops cometh up against the people.*" The hard ellipses which this rendering assumes in the Heb. text are also against it. Owing to the ambiguity of the pronouns in Heb. another rendering still is possible: "the day of trouble, which is to come up against the people that *invades* (assails) *us*." So Wellh. Certainty as to the exact meaning is not attainable. The "day of distress," however, is connected with the Theophany of the Judge, in conformity with the whole scope of the poem. Zeph. i. 15 also calls the day of the Lord "a day of distress." This manifestation of the great God is terrible even to Israel, notwithstanding that the issue of it will be the deliverance of the people of God and the destruction of their adversaries. The "day" is personified and spoken of as coming on mankind ("the people") like an invader.

17—19. It is not easy to say whether *v.* 17 contains a series of suppositions referring to what may happen in the future, or describes a condition of things actually existing. To the majority of scholars the latter way of reading the verse is the more natural. In that case, the verse does not suggest a condition of scarcity and barrenness arising from a hostile invasion of the land, but rather one due to the incidence of severe natural calamities. Then the word *for*, with which the verse begins, connects very loosely with the preceding *v.* 16. But there is a good deal to be said for the former interpretation. The verses then express the idea that the writer, speaking as representative of the nation, would feel the same unruffled confidence in the midst of scarcity and failure of crops as he did in the face of invasion by an enemy. Many scholars assume that the poem originally ended with *v.* 16, and that *vv.* 17—19 are an addition. See Additional Note, p. 99.

The verse may read:

For though the fig tree doth not blossom,
And there is no fruit in the vines;
The produce of the olive faileth,
And the fields yield no meat;
The flock is cut off from the fold,
And there is no herd in the stalls.

18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.
19 Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength,
And he maketh my feet like hinds' *feet*,
And will make me to walk upon mine high places.

For the Chief Musician, on my stringed instruments.

Or the verbs may be conditional "should not blossom" &c. and, in *v.* 18, "Yet would I rejoice."

It is the community that speaks in *vv.* 17—19, as is evident from *vv.* 18, 19.

18. *Yet I will rejoice in the* LORD] Comp. Ps. v. 11, xxxii. 11, xxxiii. 1; Is. lxi. 10. In spite of calamities the people will joy in God; though earthly blessings perish He remains their portion. The joy is partly a present one in the possession of God, as Ps. lxxiii. 23, "Nevertheless I am continually with thee"; and partly one of hope in His salvation; Ps. xviii. 46; Mic. vii. 7; Is. xvii. 12 ff.

19. *Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength*] Cf. Ps. lxxiii. 26, "God is the strength of my heart"; xviii. 32, "The God that girdeth me with strength." The strength is an inward one, confidence and assurance and courageousness in the face of all external afflictions.

like hinds' feet] The points in the comparison are perhaps swiftness and security. What is suggested is the freshness of life, the power and confidence in action, which is felt to be drawn from God.

And will make me to walk] Or, **and he maketh me to tread**. For the figure cf. Deut. xxxiii. 29, xxxii. 13.

upon mine high places] The words seem still to carry on the figure of the "hinds' feet." The pronoun *mine* does not refer to any particular high places; *my* high places are just those on which I walk or tread. LXX, Syr., Vulg. omit *my*, with no difference of meaning. The phrase "tread on my high places" expresses the freedom, the superiority to hindrance or restraint, and the power, which the community is conscious of in the strength of God. Cf. Ps. xviii. 33. Or it may imply triumphant possession of a land.

For the Chief Musician] The subscription denotes that the Psalm belonged to a collection in the keeping of the Chief Musician or Director of Music in the Temple services. It occurs in the titles of fifty-four Psalms.

on my stringed instruments] Or, **with** my. In the titles to Ps. iv., vi. &c. in A.V. the original word *neginoth* is retained. In the sing. this word may mean *playing* on strings, in the plur. it appears to mean stringed instruments. The whole expression has the meaning: *To the director in the* (Temple) *music*; or, *To the director; with* (Temple) *music*. The pronoun *my* occasions difficulty. On the

assumption that this musical direction came from the author of the hymn it has been inferred that he was a Levite and a musician. Such an assumption would exclude the authorship of Habakkuk. But even supposing the author were some other Levite, how could a single member of the orchestra say "*my* stringed instruments"? The LXX reads "in *his* song," which might refer to the director, but no reliance can ever be placed on the pronouns of the LXX. All evidence, however, is against ascribing any of these musical directions to the authors of the hymns themselves. The similar passage Is. xxxviii. 20 should perhaps be rendered: "Therefore will we strike (play) my stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord." In both passages the pronoun *my* should probably be deleted according to the usage in the titles to Ps. iv., vi.

On the Prayer of Habakkuk see Kirkpatrick, *Doctrine of the Prophets*, pp. 280—285.

Additional Note on Ch. III.

In an article in *J.T.S.* vol. xii., no. 46, Dr H. St J. Thackeray makes some interesting suggestions about this chapter. His main point is to establish the use of the chapter as a lesson for the Feast of Weeks in the ancient synagogue lectionary. Two lessons were normally read in the synagogue service: one, the *pārāshah* (section) or *sidra* (order), being taken from the Pentateuch, the other, the *haphṭārah* (dismissal), from the "Prophets." These lessons were usually so arranged that there was some connexion in the subject-matter between them. The Pentateuchal sections were commonly known by a catchword, which might either be the first word, or some other that was specially noticeable. Dr Thackeray claims that the three Hebrew words which form the latter part of *v.* 9, and are translated "the oaths to the tribes were a *sure* word," are no part of the text, but are catchwords giving the clue to the three Pentateuchal lessons corresponding to this *haphṭārah* or Prophetical lesson for the Festival of Weeks in each of the three years of the triennial cycle of lessons.

The first Hebrew word he reads as "weeks," and, following up a note given in some MSS. of the Hebrew text at the end of ii. 20 ("*haphṭārah* for the second day of weeks"), he concludes that Hab. iii. 1—9 was the *haphṭārah* corresponding to the *pārāshah*, Deut. xvi. 9—12.

The second Hebrew word rendered "tribes" he quite legitimately translates "rods," and connects with the *pārāshah*, Numb. xvii. 1—9 (Heb. xvii. 16—24), which was apparently read as the lesson for Pentecost or Weeks in the last year of the triennial cycle.

The last word (rendered "word") he takes to be an abbreviated form of the first word of Gen. xii. 1 ("*And* the Lord *said*"),

the section Gen. xii. 1—8 being read at Pentecost in the first year of the triennial cycle.

Dr Thackeray claims to detect another catchword in the note appended to our chapter. Instead of "For the Chief Musician on my stringed instruments" one family of Greek MSS. (the Barberini) has "he hasted and ceased." Retranslating this into Hebrew and making a slight alteration Dr Thackeray arrives at the phrase "Morrow of the Sabbath." This is a striking expression which occurs three times in Lev. xxiii. (11, 15, 16), a chapter from which the earliest festival lessons were taken.

A further suggestion of Dr Thackeray is that the last three verses of the Psalm (17—19) are a later addition, designed to bring the *haphṭārah* from Habakkuk into line with Lev. xxvi. (especially *v.* 20), a chapter which was frequently read at Pentecost in addition to the other Pentateuchal lessons. The words "In wrath remember mercy" (*v.* 2) he regards as another liturgical addition suggested by the double assurance in Lev. xxvi. 42, 45 that God would remember His covenant.

Professor Burkitt, writing in *J.T.S.* vol. xvi., no. 61, with reference to Dr Thackeray's paper, suggests that the Psalm was composed for the Pentecost Festival some time in the decade B.C. 620—610, when the reformation of Josiah was turning men's eyes back to the days of old and the Law of Moses. He points out that in the Apocryphal legend of Bel and the Dragon Habakkuk is again connected with the harvest, as he is represented as bringing food to the reapers.

ZÉPHANIAH

INTRODUCTION

§ 1. The Prophet.

The name Zephaniah appears to mean, *he whom Jehovah protects*, lit. *has hidden* (cf. Ps. lxxxiii. 3). The words used in ch. i. 4, "I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place," shew that the prophet lived in Jerusalem. He is familiar with the different localities in the capital, as the Fish gate, the Second Quarter, and the Maktesh, apparently the quarter of the merchants (i. 10, 11), and with the various classes inhabiting the city; and his picture of the social and religious practices prevailing among the people is drawn from observation (i. 4—8, 12).

In ch. i. 1 it is said that the prophet was the great-great-grandson of Hezekiah. It is not usual to carry the genealogy of a prophet higher up than his father: Isaiah, for example, is called the son of Amoz, Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, Hosea the son of Beeri, and similarly in most cases. There was, therefore, probably some reason for carrying the descent of Zephaniah back through four generations. Such a reason would appear if Hezekiah, the highest link in the chain, were the king of that name. That the words "king of Judah" are not added after Hezekiah is of little consequence. His name was too well known to need such an addition, and as the words "king of Judah" had to follow the name of Josiah, their repetition would have been awkward in style.

The objection has been urged that, as Josiah was third in descent from Hezekiah, if Zephaniah was the fourth in descent from the same ancestor, the two could hardly have been contemporaries (ch. i. 1). The objection is not fatal, though perhaps Zephaniah could not have been of an age to prophesy at an early period of Josiah's reign. From the dates given in the Book of Kings (2 Kings xxi. 1, 19) it

appears that Manasseh was 45 years of age when his son Amon was born. This was probably an unusually late age, for Amon's own son, Josiah, must have been born when he was 16 (2 Kings xxi. 19, xxii. 1). If Amariah, therefore, was a brother of Manasseh, he may very well have had a grandson contemporary with Manasseh's son Amon, or even older than he. There is nothing, consequently, against the supposition that it was at this point that an additional generation came in in the line of Zephaniah's descent. The prophet may have been about the same age as Josiah himself, or even some years older. When Jeremiah began to prophesy in 626 Josiah was 21, and 26 at the time of his great reformation. Zephaniah may have been one of the "prophets" (2 Kings xxiii. 2) who supported this reformation, though neither his name nor that of Jeremiah is mentioned.

The royal descent of Zephaniah, though not certain, is supported on plausible grounds. The prophet condemns the members of the royal house for their aping of foreign manners, and for the high-handed wrongs practised by their retainers. It would be interesting if the condemnation came from one who belonged to the royal family himself, though not at all strange, considering how widely the sentiments of Josiah differed from those of his grandfather Manasseh and of his father Amon.

Powis Smith notes that "his complaint is almost wholly against the privileged classes, the rich and the powerful; yet he does not pose as the spokesman of the poor, and there is lacking in his utterances that note of sympathy with their sufferings which is so evident in Amos and Micah, a lack easily explained if he himself were a member of the aristocracy, and had never felt the pinch of poverty."

Zephaniah is mentioned in the book *De Vitis Prophetarum*, ascribed to Epiphanius, in which he is said to have been of the tribe of Simeon, from the field of Sabaratha, and to have "died in an apocalypse of the Lord." The existence of an Apocalypse of Zephaniah is attested by a quotation in Clem. Alex. *Stromateis*, v. 11, which runs as follows: "And a spirit took me, and carried me up into the fifth heaven, and I saw angels called lords, whose diadem was placed upon them

by the Holy Spirit, and the throne of each of them was seven times brighter than the light of the rising sun, and they were dwelling in temples of salvation, and hymning the ineffable God, Most High." Two Coptic fragments of an apocalypse ascribed to Zephaniah were discovered at Akhmim. His connexion with an apocalyptic writing is the more apt inasmuch as, in the words of G. A. Smith, "his book is the first tinging of prophecy with apocalypse: that is the moment which it supplies in the history of Israel's religion."

§ 2. Date of the Prophecy.

In the title to the prophecy (i. 1) Zephaniah is said to have prophesied in the days of Josiah. Josiah reigned B.C. 639—608, and his reform, consequent on the discovery of the Book of the Law in the Temple (2 Kings xxii., xxiii.), was inaugurated in the 18th year of his reign, B.C. 621. The prophet's description of the state of religion and manners in his day, the syncretism and idolatry (i. 1—4), the high-handed injustice of the ruling officials (i. 8 ff.), and the general corruption of all classes (iii. 1—7), points to a time before Josiah's reform. No doubt Jeremiah assails similar abuses at a time much later. But most of Jeremiah's prophecies belong to the reigns of Josiah's successors, when his reforms were allowed to fall into abeyance and former practices to some extent reasserted themselves.

This is the conclusion of the great majority of critics, and it certainly seems most reasonable. Those on the other hand who argue for a date after the reformation of Josiah (Delitzsch, Schulz &c.) lay stress on the phrases "I will cut off the remnant of Baal" in i. 4 and "the king's sons" in i. 8. Certainly in their most literal sense they would both suit a time comparatively late in Josiah's reign, when Baalism had been almost exterminated by the reformation, and the king was old enough to have sons. But both expressions are capable of another meaning. "The remnant of Baal" may mean "Baal worship to the last vestige," and "the king's sons" may refer generally to the royal family[1]. In 2 Chr. xxxiv. 3 it is stated that

[1] Cf. Kirkpatrick, *Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 260 *n*.

Josiah's efforts in the direction of reform began in his 12th year. It is possible that Zephaniah might allude to this earlier movement when he speaks of the remnant of Baal, though on the whole the most likely sense of the phrase is that given above. In either case the prophecy would precede Josiah's final reform in 621.

The burden of the book is "the day of the Lord," the judgement of God upon the whole earth. The day of the Lord is a day of darkness and supernatural terrors, but also a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities. The judgement is executed partly by instruments whom the Lord has consecrated for that end. It is a sacrifice, and the guests are already bidden. Israel is the sacrifice, and the guests are those whom the Lord has called to consume it. It is obvious that in the phrase, "He hath sanctified his guests" (i. 7), the prophet refers to some particular people, who, he anticipates, will execute the judgement of God on Israel (Is. xiii. 3 ff.). It was the movements of this people, the report of them and the alarm they were creating among the nations, that awoke the presentiment in the prophet's mind that Jehovah was about to use them for the chastisement of Israel and of the world. The Chaldeans could hardly be the people in the prophet's view, for, though Nabopolassar succeeded in 625 in placing the crown of Babylon on his brow, his kingdom was still a dependency of Assyria, and probably confined to the southern half of Babylonia. Assyria was still mistress of the West, and there was nothing in the history of the Chaldeans, nor in their position at the time to suggest that they would be a menace to the world.

In a useful essay on Zephaniah[1], Schwally has suggested that the Egyptians are the people whom the prophet has in view. The suggestion is not a happy one. As the prophets represent the "day of the Lord," it is a judgement upon the known world, upon Israel and the historical nations lying within its horizon of vision; and the nation that executes the judgement is some fierce and wild people, emerging from the far-off and unknown regions of the earth, the report of

[1] *Zeitschr. für Alttest. Wissenschaft*, 1890, Heft 2.

which only has reached the historical nations. In the earliest chapters of Isaiah it may be doubtful if any nation be regarded as the Lord's instrument of judgement; the "day of the Lord" seems altogether a moral presentiment: the evil of mankind and their insensibility to the sovereignty of Jehovah are so great that the Lord, the King, must interpose to bring Himself to the knowledge of men. Even if somewhat later the Assyrians be in the prophet's mind, the Assyrians at this time were still an unknown people, at least to Judah. In Is. xiii. the nation associated with the day of the Lord is the Medes, a terrible and ruthless people "from a far country, from the uttermost part of heaven" (*v.* 5). And in Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix. the nation is Gog, a people from the uttermost regions of the North, and the prophet appears to identify this nation with the foe prophesied of in Zephaniah, whose prediction he regards as still awaiting fulfilment (Ezek. xxxviii. 17). A historical nation like Egypt, which had always lain within Israel's horizon, was not fitted to be the executor of Jehovah's judgement upon the known world, not to mention that in the present case Cush, which either means Egypt or includes it, has itself to bear the judgement (Zeph. ii. 12)[1].

In the second half of the 7th century the Scythians appeared in western Asia, and for a number of years spread terror and confusion among the nations. They broke into Palestine and penetrated as far as Egypt, though Psammetichus (B.C. 663—610) is said to have saved his country from their ravages by bribing them to retire. In B.C. 620 Cyaxares the Mede was compelled by their invasion to raise the siege of Nineveh, and for twenty years he seems to have been rendered powerless by them. It is in all likelihood to this people that Zephaniah alludes. The date of their appearance in Palestine cannot be ascertained with precision, although the beginning of the last quarter of the century may be taken as an approximate date. Wellhausen suggests that the words in ch. ii. 3, "it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger," may have been written after it was

[1] Schwally, however, denies the authenticity of the verse.

seen that the invaders were following the coast road, and it was hoped that Jerusalem would escape. There is nothing in the prophet's language to support this view. It is certainly more natural to suppose that the prophecy belongs to the time before the actual appearance of the enemy in Palestine. The foe from the North of the earlier chapters of Jeremiah is probably the same terrible people, and the imposing though somewhat vague pictures of them given by both prophets shew that they drew from rumour rather than from actual acquaintance (Zeph. i. 14—18). The order in which the nations are named in ch. ii. cannot be taken as indicating the line of march followed by the invaders. This order is Philistia, Moab and Ammon, Cush, and finally Nineveh; while the line of march would have given Philistia and then Cush or Egypt[1]. Neither can it be supposed that the prophet's view was that Moab and Ammon would suffer from the back-wave of the retreating Scythians, because here again Cush is named after Moab and Ammon. It would be more natural to suppose that, speaking when only rumours of the approaching foe had reached him, the prophet anticipated that they would follow the two great roads, that on the Mediterranean coast and that on the other side of the Jordan, or that the wave of invasion would submerge the whole country from the sea to the desert. In enumerating the nations the order followed by the prophet is west (Philistia), east (Moab), south (Cush), north (Nineveh), and no principle is to be detected in the order any more than in Amos i., where the order is north-east (Damascus), south-west (Gaza), north-west (Tyre), south-east (Edom).

Powis Smith thinks that B.C. 627 is the earliest date for the appearance of the Scythians in western Asia. He remarks that this coincides with the year of Jeremiah's call (Jer. i. 2) and furnishes the necessary external stimulus for the emergence of both Jeremiah and Zephaniah. This date may be accepted as at least approximately accurate. It is no real objection that Zephaniah's expectation of the over-

[1] The oracle on Moab and Ammon, however (ii. 8—10), is suspected by several scholars.

throw of Assyria and Egypt by the Scythians was not accomplished.

§ 3. Integrity of the Prophecy.

While ch. i. is universally admitted to be the writing of Zephaniah, several scholars have recently expressed serious doubts in regard to ch. ii. and iii. Stade[1] assigns ch. iii. to the post-Exilic age, and is suspicious of some things in ch. ii., viz. *vv.* 1—3, 11. In his essay already alluded to Schwally concludes that ch. iii. belongs to the post-Exilic age, and ch. ii. 5—12 to the period of the Exile; only ii. 13—15 can be ascribed to Zephaniah, and possibly ii. 1—4. In a well-reasoned paper on Habakkuk and Zephaniah[2], Budde argues for the genuineness of ii. 1—3, iii. 1—5, 7, 8, 6 (in this order), 11—13; rejecting ii. 4—15 and iii. 9, 10, 14—20. Kuenen finds no difficulty except with regard to iii. 14—20, which he assigns to a later date. G. A. Smith accepts the authenticity of the whole book with the exception of ii. 8—10, iii. 9, 10, 14—20. Driver thinks that ii. 7 *b*, 11, iii. 9, 10 and probably 18—20 are of later origin than the rest of the book. Marti has a very elaborate division of the book. He regards most of ch. i. (except *vv.* 6 and 18), and most of ii. 1—7 (exc. 3), 12—14 as the original prophecy of Zephaniah dating from B.C. 627 or 626: iii. 1—7 as an addition dating possibly from the 5th century but probably from the 2nd, and the rest of the book as a 2nd century redaction. Cornill rejects ii. 7—11 (except 7 *b*) and iii. 14—20. Duhm questions ii. 3, 6 (most of), 8—11, 15, and all iii. Powis Smith regards ii. 8, 9 as presupposing the conditions of the Exile, ii. 15 as taking for granted the fall of Nineveh, and all ch. iii. (with the exception of 1—5 and possibly 6 and 7) as post-Exilic.

The present is not the place to enter with any minuteness into the questions raised. The general ground on which the passages named above are denied to Zephaniah is that a phraseology and a circle of ideas appear in them which are

[1] *History*, i. 644, note 3.

[2] *Die Bücher Habakkuk und Sephanja*, Stud. u. Kritiken, 1893, p. 383 ff.

characteristic of the Exile and of post-Exilic thought, to which therefore they are to be assigned; and, as regards ch. ii. 4—15 in particular, that the rather keen nationalistic spirit and the resentment against the neighbouring peoples displayed in the passage are not in harmony with the profound sense of the sinfulness of his own people shewn by the prophet in ch. i.

(1) With regard to ch. ii. 1—3 it may be remarked that, though the text may be in some confusion, the idea expressed by the passage is necessary to complete the thought of ch. i. The prophets do not usually content themselves with bare threats or announcements of judgement. Neither do they ever contemplate a complete destruction of the people. The purpose of the judgement is not to exterminate, but to purify (Is. iv. 4), and even when it appears imminent it may be averted by repentance and amendment (Jer. vii. 5 ff., xviii. 7; Joel ii. 12 ff.). Such expressions as "all ye meek of the earth," "seek meekness" (ii. 3), have been thought suspicious on the ground that the use of "meek," "meekness" as religious terms is characteristic of an age later than that of Zephaniah. But unquestionably the idea that humility before God is the right attitude of men is one of the oldest ideas in Scripture (Ex. x. 3, J), and one of those most frequently insisted on by the prophets (Is. ii. 11; Mic. vi. 8), and the argument that, though this be true, the term "meek" is not yet used in early writings to express the religious idea is rather precarious. In Numb. xii. 3 (E) the expression is used of Moses, and in Is. xi. 4 the phrase "the meek of the earth" bears the same sense as it does Zeph. ii. 3. Comp. also Am. viii. 4.

(2) Objections have been taken to ch. ii. 4—15 as a whole or to parts of it, e.g. the prophecy against Moab and Ammon, *vv.* 8—10, and the passage has been assigned to the period of the Exile. In answer to those who would reject the whole passage it may be urged that it was to be expected that Zephaniah, who foresees the approaching day of the Lord, and a universal judgement to be executed by the terrible foe from the North, should mention some nations by name, just as Amos does ch. i., ii. It is true that he is mainly

occupied with the condition of his own people, whose indifference and sin and idolatry must for ever be swept away that a new era may arise. And it is also true that in some other passages where the day of the Lord and a general judgement are announced, the judgement concentrates itself upon a particular nation, on Babylon in Is. xiii., and on Israel Is. ii., iii. But both in ch. i. and ch. iii. the view of Zephaniah remains general, e.g. i. 14—18 and iii. 8.

Further, the passage ii. 4—15 appears to have no points of contact with the period of the Exile. A threat of God's judgement upon Nineveh during the Exile would be very strange, considering that Nineveh was in ruins twenty years before the Exile began. It may be admitted that the prophecy against Nineveh is somewhat general, and wants the power of Nahum's impassioned oratory, but the style of Zephaniah throughout has little of the vigour of that of Nahum, though in religious depth and earnestness of moral tone he greatly excels the other prophet.

There is one other point which rather tells against dating ii. 4—15 in the period of the Exile. The passage does not allude to Edom. But it is highly improbable that a threat of judgement on the nations, uttered during the Exile, would fail to include Edom. On the other hand if the passage belong to the time of Zephaniah, the parallel between it and Deuteronomy in the view taken of the neighbouring nations is what might have been looked for. In Deut. xxiii. 3—8 Moab and Ammon are also strongly denounced, while Edom is spoken of with kindness.

As no movements among the nations are known late in the Exile which would suggest an impending attack upon the nations named in ii. 4—15, those who assign the passage to this period are compelled to regard it as totally unreal. It is a mere foil to ch. i., with no historical foundation. It is the production of a writer who desired to relieve the dark picture of judgement on Israel by presenting a companion one shewing a judgement no less terrible upon the nations. It was really of no consequence what heathen nations were named; the author felt safe in devoting Moab and Ammon, Israel's old relentless foes, to the vengeance of God at any

time. This is a view of the passage which serious students will not take without good evidence.

The further argument against the genuineness of *vv.* 8—10 on the ground that they are metrically distinct from their context is precarious, in view of the uncertainty as to the exact nature of the metre of Hebrew poetry which still to a large extent obtains.

Ch. ii. 4—15 appears to be a unity, being written in elegiac measure. In some verses the rhythm is imperfect. The same rhythmical irregularity is observable in most of the elegiac passages in the prophets. Either the poet did not succeed completely in giving expression to the rhythmical movement, or, what is more likely, the verses have been mutilated in transcription or loaded with additions. It is quite possible that *vv.* 4—15 have in various places been expanded. In particular *v.* 15 may, as Powis Smith suggests, date from after the fall of Nineveh.

(3) No reasonable objection can be urged against the genuineness of ch. iii. 1—7. The passage is characterized by the same moral earnestness that distinguishes ch. i. 2—ii. 3. It is altogether improbable that such epithets as "rebellious and polluted" and "oppressive" should be applied to Jerusalem except in the pre-Exilic period. Again, *vv.* 11—13 have also every mark of genuineness. They describe the Jerusalem of the future, purified by judgement. And as was to be expected the picture is in contrast, point by point, to the Jerusalem of the prophet's day (*vv.* 1—7), just as the Jerusalem of Isaiah's dreams (i. 26), righteous and faithful, is in contrast to the city of murderers (*v.* 21) with which he was familiar.

Verses 8—10 form the connexion between *vv.* 1—7 and *vv.* 11—13, and the verses are rather obscure. In *v.* 8 the threat of universal judgement is repeated from ch. i. 18. This judgement must be considered to overtake both Israel and the heathen, "the whole earth." The following verses then describe the day of salvation that breaks after the night of judgement, *vv.* 9, 10 applying to the nations and *v.* 11 ff. to Israel. The text of *v.* 10 is difficult (see notes). If the rendering of R.V. marg. is accepted, the verse would predict

that the converted nations shall bring back the dispersed of Israel as an offering to Jehovah (Is. lxvi. 20). With this sense the pre-Exilic date of *v.* 10 would be questionable. But it is possible that Ewald is right in reading "the daughter of Put" for "the daughter of my dispersed." In this case the verse will refer, not to Israel at all, but to the homage of the heathen world. Cf. Is. xviii. 7[1].

The extremely beautiful passage *vv.* 14—20 appears to belong to a different situation. Instead of threatening a universal judgement on Jew and Gentile, as alike guilty before God, the writer promises to Zion that Jehovah "will deal with all them that afflict her" (*v.* 19). Of those belonging to Zion there are also some "that sorrow far away from the solemn assembly," and a promise is given that they shall be "gathered" (*vv.* 18, 20). Further, the "judgements" on Israel seem to have already fallen and to lie behind the prophet (*v.* 15), while before him there is the vision of a glorious day about to dawn. The situation is very similar to that which appears in Is. xl. ff. The language of the passage, too, is not without similarities to these chapters of Isaiah, e.g. "sing" (*v.* 14), "fear not" (*v.* 16), and other expressions. There is a great contrast between the jubilant tone of *vv.* 14—20 and that of *vv.* 11—13, which is very sombre. In iii. 1—13 the profound moral feeling of the prophet, his sense of the sin of his people and of the severity of the judgements needful to change them, colours his picture of their final felicity (*vv.* 11—13). Though the people are blessed and enjoy peace, the scars of the afflictions which they have passed through remain upon them.

There are some things in ch. iii. which might suggest that it is a unity, e.g. the use of the phrases "thy midst," "her midst," *vv.* 5, 11, 12, 15, 17. There are also coincidences of the language with that of Jeremiah, which do not appear in ch. i. Such similarities are "receive correction" (iii. 2, 7, cf. Jer. v. 3, vii. 28 &c.); reference to the "righteousness" of Jehovah (iii. 5, cf. Jer. xi. 20, xii. 1); the phrase "rose early and corrupted" (iii. 7, cf. Jer. vii. 13, and very often); the expression "fierce anger" (iii. 8, cf. Jer. iv. 8, 26, and a

[1] See the note on *v.* 9.

number of times); deprecation of pride or "haughtiness" on the part of the people (iii. 11, cf. Jer. xiii. 15); the idea of the Lord "rejoicing over" His people (iii. 17, cf. Jer. xxxii. 41); and the promise that Israel restored shall be "a name and a praise" (iii. 20, cf. Jer. xiii. 11, xxxiii. 9).

There is nothing in these coincidences to awaken suspicion of the genuineness at least of iii. 1—13, though they might suggest that the passage was later than ch. i. The progress of thought in ch. i. 2—ii. 3 is entirely parallel to that in ch. iii. 1—13. In the former passage the judgement, ch. i., is followed by the prospect of deliverance, ch. ii. 1—3; and in the latter the judgement, iii. 1—8, is followed by the promise of redemption, iii. 9—13.

§ 4. Contents of the Prophecy.

The prophecy of Zephaniah falls into two general divisions, first, ch. i. 2—iii. 8, a threat of judgement on the world, on Israel and the nations; and secondly, a promise of salvation equally universal, ch. iii. 9—20.

The great conception of the prophecy is that of "the day of the Lord." The day of the Lord is the time when the Lord reveals Himself in His fulness to the world, when He judges evil and fulfils His great purposes of redemption among men. The judgement of this "day" is universal, though it falls primarily upon the sinners in Israel. But the judgement has not its end in itself, it is but the means of making Jehovah known to the world, and this knowledge of Him is salvation. The lips of the nations are purified that they may call upon the name of the Lord, and Israel comes forth from the judgement a chastened and humble people, trusting in Jehovah their God alone (iii. 9—13).

Jehovah's revelation of Himself is accompanied with terrible signs and convulsions in nature (i. 14—18). But for the execution of His judgement He also uses instruments, whom He has commissioned and consecrated for that work. The judgement on Israel is represented by the prophet as a great sacrificial feast. Israel is the sacrifice, and the fierce nation from afar, the executors of His judgement, are the guests whom Jehovah has invited to consume it.

The first division of the prophecy, the announcement of judgement, ch. i. 2—iii. 8, has three chief sections: (i) the judgement on Israel, ch. i. 2—ii. 3. (ii) The judgement on the nations, ch. ii. 4—15. And (iii) the renewed threat of judgement on Israel and the nations alike, ch. iii. 1—8.

i. Ch. i. 2—ii. 3, the judgement on all created things, concentrating itself on Judah and Jerusalem.

(1) The judgement is universal, consuming man and beast (*vv.* 2, 3). (2) It falls particularly on the devotees of false worship and on the irreligious (*vv.* 4—7). (3) But all classes are depraved, from the royal house down to the people. The Lord will search Jerusalem with lanterns, and no hiding-place shall conceal men (*vv.* 8—13). (4) The terrors of the day of the Lord. It is a day of wrath, a day of darkness and convulsions in nature. It is also a day of the trumpet and hostile assault on the fenced cities, when men's blood shall be poured out as the dust (*vv.* 14—18). (5) Therefore let the meek seek Jehovah, it may be they shall be hid in the day of His fierce anger (ch. ii. 1—3).

ii. Ch. ii. 4—15, judgement on the nations.

Five nations are named, the Philistines, Moab and Ammon, Cush and Assyria, lying west, east, south and north of Israel.

iii. Ch. iii. 1—8, renewed announcement of judgement, particularly on Jerusalem, but also on the nations, even on the whole earth.

(1) Jerusalem is rebellious, polluted and full of oppression (*v.* 1); disobedient to God, and indifferent to His word and His operations among the nations (*vv.* 2, 5—7). Every class within her is corrupt: her princes violent, her judges venal and greedy (*v.* 3), her prophets unstable and false, and her priests profaners of that which is holy (*v.* 4 ff.).

(2) Therefore the Lord will rise up in judgement and consume the whole earth in the fire of His jealousy (*v.* 8).

The second division of the prophecy, the promise of salvation to the world, ch. iii. 9—20, has also three short sections: the promise to the nations (*vv.* 9, 10); the promise to Israel (*vv.* 11—13); and lastly a reference to the final condition of Israel, for ever joyful in the presence of their God (*vv.* 14—20).

(1) In His judgements the Lord is made known unto the nations, and He purifies their lips so that they fitly call on the name of the Lord; and all peoples, even the most distant, serve Him with offerings (*vv.* 9, 10).

(2) And Israel comes forth from the judgement chastened and no more haughty, the people's trust being in the Lord alone. And the social wrongs of former days are no more found; every one deals in rectitude and truthfulness with his neighbour (*vv.* 11—13).

(3) The people redeemed and all their outcasts restored rejoice for ever in the Lord, who abides in the midst of them, mighty to save (*vv.* 14—20).

The value of the Book of Zephaniah is not to be estimated by its size. In two respects it is of great importance: first, for the revelation which it gives of the religious and social condition of Jerusalem in the years preceding the Exile; and secondly, on account of the profoundly earnest moral tone by which it is pervaded. Under the former heading Marti draws attention to the picture of syncretism in religion, foreign fashions in dress, luxury and oppression going hand in hand, and crooked dealing in trade. He points out also Zephaniah's affinity with the standpoint of Amos, Hosea and Isaiah. As to the prophet's earnestness there can be no question, but it is an austere and grim earnestness, almost entirely lacking in the notes of tenderness and pathos. He is obsessed by his conception of the day of the Lord with its accompaniment of war and famine and exile. It was left for another writer to enlarge upon the joy of the redeemed (iii. 14—20). Yet even Zephaniah has his brighter moments. He holds fast to the Isaianic conception of the remnant that shall survive. Perhaps not less remarkable is the prophet's comprehensive view of history. The history of the nations is but another name for the operations of Jehovah among them; and the goal which all these operations pursue is not the redemption of Israel merely but of mankind. The most important parts of the prophecy are ch. i. 2—ii. 3 and ch. iii. 1—13. The other parts, e.g. ch. ii. 4—15, are characterized by a narrower nationalistic spirit. The most beautiful thing

in the book is the passage ch. iii. 11—13. The picture of the remnant coming newly forth from the convulsions and afflictions of the judgement, humble and truthful, blessed, but filled with a chastened joy, is exquisite.

"The immediate judgement with which Zephaniah threatened Jerusalem was averted. But his prophecy began to be fulfilled in the disasters which befell neighbouring nations. It was fulfilled yet further in those great convulsions of the nations of the East which followed shortly. It was fulfilled for Judah in the captivity and the destruction of the guilty nation. For these were all steps of progress advancing towards the great end, elements contributing to the fulness of the times, preludes to the establishment of the universal divine kingdom[1]."

LITERATURE.

On the book generally see Literature on Nahum, p. 15.

Articles by Selbie in *H. D. B.*, and W. R. Smith and Driver in *Enc. Bibl.*

On the teaching of the book:

R. H. Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of the Future Life in Israel*, &c. (1899). And various works on Old Testament Prophecy by Davidson, Orelli (1885), &c.

[1] Kirkpatrick, *Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 262.

"The great day of the Lord."

ZEPHANIAH

THE word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah 1
the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of
Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the
son of Amon, king of Judah.

I will utterly consume all things from off the face of 2
the ground, saith the LORD. I will consume man and 3

CH. I. THE TITLE.

1. *The word...unto Zephaniah*] The name Zephaniah means, *he whom Jehovah has hid*, that is, treasures, or protects. The name is not uncommon, Jer. xxi. 1, lii. 24; Zech. vi. 10.

the son of Hezekiah] Probably the king of that name. It is unusual to carry the genealogy of a prophet further up than his father, and the exception in the present case suggests that Hezekiah, the last link in the chain, was a person of distinction. See Introduction, § 1.

in the days of Josiah...king of Judah] Josiah came to the throne in B.C. 639 at the age of eight, and was slain at Megiddo in B.C. 609 or 608.

THE BOOK.

The book has two great divisions: first, ch. i. 2—iii. 8, a threat of judgement on the world: on Judah and the nations; and secondly, a promise of salvation equally universal, ch. iii. 9—20. The judgement is that of the great day of the Lord. The prophet represents it as universal, but concentrating itself on Judah, ch. i. 2—ii. 3; then as involving the nations, ch. ii. 4—15; and finally he speaks of Judah and the nations together, ch. iii. 1—8.

The passage ch. i. 2—ii. 3 has these divisions: (1) Judgement on all created things, and especially on Judah and Jerusalem (*vv.* 2—7); (2) the classes in Jerusalem whom God will search out and punish (*vv.* 8—13); (3) the terrors of the day of the Lord (*vv.* 14—18); (4) exhortation to men to seek righteousness that they may be hid in the day of the Lord's anger (ch. ii. 1—3).

2—7. THE UNIVERSAL JUDGEMENT OF THE DAY OF THE LORD.

2. *from off the face of the ground*] i.e. the earth, cf. *v.* 3. The judgement is indiscriminate, all that lives shall be swept away.

beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the
fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked;
and I will cut off man from off the face of the ground,
4 saith the LORD. And I will stretch out mine hand upon

Though it is men against whom God's anger burns, the anger once kindled devours round about and consumes all created things. The sphere of man's life, the realm of his rule (Ps. viii. 6—8), is involved with himself in a common destruction.

3. Verse 3 particularizes the "all things" of *v.* 2, cattle and fowl and fishes of the sea, and man. Cf. Hos. iv. 3, "Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away." Similarly Ezek. xxxviii. 19, "Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence"; cf. Is. ii. 19—21.

and the stumblingblocks...wicked] The words are rather obscure, and seem to disturb the connexion. The term rendered "stumblingblock" occurs again Is. iii. 6, "let this *ruin* (the country in anarchy) be under thy hand," and Hitzig would understand it here in a somewhat similar sense, the houses &c. "destined to become heaps" (Job xv. 28). The somewhat similar word usually rendered "stumblingblock" is used in the sense of idol, or any object or practice of false worship (Ezek. xiv. 3, 4, 7), and this sense is more probable here. But the clause introduces an idea not in harmony with the rest of the verse, and it is omitted by several scholars. Others emend to obtain the sense "and I will cause the wicked to stumble" (so Oort).

4. The prophet turns to Judah and Jerusalem. Though the day of the Lord was the revelation of Jehovah to the world, and therefore a thing universal, the centre of the judgement in the view of the pre-Exilic prophets was Israel (Am. i., ii.; Is. ii., iii.), for judgement began at the house of God (Am. iii. 2). With the Exile the judgement on Israel seemed to have been fulfilled, and during the Exile and later the judgement of the day of the Lord is represented as falling on the heathen world (Is. xiii.; Zech. i.—vi.), and its issue is Israel's redemption. But after the Restoration, when Israel was again a people and far from answering to its ideal, prophets have to threaten it anew with the refiner's fire of the day of the Lord (Mal. iii. 2 ff.).

And I will stretch] i.e. in order to smite, Is. v. 25, ix. 12, xiv. 26, 27. As in Am. i., ii. the cloud laden with judgement trails round the horizon, discharging itself on one nation after another, and finally settles over Israel, so here Jehovah's wrath against all created things concentrates itself on Judah and Jerusalem.

Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, *and* the name of the Chemarim with the priests; and them that 5

the remnant of Baal from this place] The words "from this place" imply that Zephaniah lived in Jerusalem. The term *Baal* appears to be used, particularly in later writers, not only of Baal proper, but also of the images of Jehovah, and even in a wider way of Jehovah under any false conception of His being. Worship rendered nominally to Jehovah, but unworthy of Him, and implying an inadequate conception of His nature, was stigmatized as Baal-worship. The expression *the remnant*, besides its natural sense of "that which is left," may mean "the whole," so that "remnant of Baal" may have the sense of "false worship wholly," and this is probably the meaning here. Cf. Is. xiv. 22, "I will...cut off from Babylon name and remnant." For "remnant" the LXX gives *names* of Baal, a rendering which may be due to the influence of Hos. ii. 17, "I will take away the names of the Baalim out of her mouth." Cf. Zech. xiii. 2. It is not likely to be right here.

the name of the Chemarim] The root *kmr* in the sense of "priest" is common to many Shemitic languages. It is found in the Tell-el-Amarna tablets as the title of a Babylonian official, and it occurs several times in Aramaic inscriptions (see G. A. Cooke, *North Semitic Inscriptions*, Nos. 64, 65, 69, 98). It is also common in Syriac. In Hebrew the verbal root has two senses, (i) to be hot, (ii) to be black. It may be doubted whether the meaning "priest" has anything to do with the idea of "be black," i.e. "black-robed." In addition to the present passage the word is used in Hos. x. 5 of the priests of the calves in the northern kingdom, and in 2 Kings xxiii. 5 of the priests of the high places in the cities of Judah and outside Jerusalem (R.V. *idolatrous priests*). In the latter passage the construction leaves it somewhat uncertain whether the strictly idolatrous priests who offered sacrifice to Baal, the sun and the moon, be also included among the Chemarim. In Hos. x. 5 the LXX does not read the word, and in 2 Kings xxiii. 5 it merely transcribes the name in Greek letters.

with the priests] The clause is wanting in the LXX, and may be a later addition. The view of Keil that "the priests" are the strictly idolatrous priests who sacrificed to Baal and other deities, while the Chemarim are the priests of the high places, has little probability; in such a case the term "priests" would have been more fully defined. Whether the clause be a gloss or not, the "priests" are probably the degenerate regular priests of Jehovah, such as are described in ch. iii. 4.

5. Besides the priests who lead the false worship, the various classes of worshippers shall be swept away: (1) those that worship the host of heaven on the housetops; (2) those who unite Jehovah and other gods in their worship; and (3) those who have renounced

worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them
that worship, which swear to the LORD and swear by
6 [1]Malcam; and them that are turned back from following

[1] Or, *their king*

the service of Jehovah, or who do not concern themselves about Him (*v.* 6)—those wholly indifferent, "settled on their lees" (*v.* 12).

the host of heaven] The "host of heaven" appears to be an expression including the heavenly bodies in general, sun, moon and stars. Of course only particular stars, such as the more brilliant fixed stars and the planets, with the constellations of the zodiac (2 Kings xxiii. 5), would be worshipped, not the starry heavens in a mass. The sun and moon are frequently specified separately from the "host of heaven," because more conspicuous, though they are no doubt to be included in the general expression, "host of heaven." The fact that the worship of the heavenly bodies was performed on the housetops indicates that the service was rendered directly to them when visible, and not indirectly to representations of them. Job xxxi. 26 describes one way of performing the worship: "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, and my mouth hath kissed my hand"; cf. Ezek. viii. 16, "Behold...about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east." Worship of the host of heaven is not alluded to by the prophets of northern Israel, unless it be in the obscure passage Am. v. 26. Its prevalence in Judah in later times was due to the influence of Assyria. It was natural that the vassal state should imitate the manners and religion of its superior. The practice appears to have been introduced by Ahaz (2 Kings xxiii. 12), and is frequently alluded to by Jeremiah and writers after his time (Jer. xix. 13). Compare the worship of the "queen of heaven," Jer. xliv. 17—19.

which swear to the LORD] To swear *to* the Lord is to acknowledge and do homage to Jehovah as God; to swear *by* the Lord (so A.V.) is to bind oneself by His name in taking an oath. Cf. Is. xlv. 23, "*unto* me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Am. viii. 5, "They that swear *by* the sin of Samaria."

and swear by Malcam] The word *Malcam* as pointed means *their King*, that is, probably Molech. Others (following Syr. and Vulg. and three MSS. of LXX) would point *Milcom*, the name of the god of the children of Ammon (1 Kings xi. 5, 33; 2 Kings xxiii. 13), who however is called Molech in 1 Kings xi. 7. Though Solomon to gratify his strange wives built high places to Milcom and other gods, worship of the Ammonitish Milcom in Israel is nowhere else alluded to, and has little probability. The spelling Malcam, "their King," is therefore preferable, though it is possible that

the LORD; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor inquired after him.

Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for 7

Malcam is merely another pronunciation of Milcom, meaning Molech. The vowels in the word *Mólech* are altogether anomalous, and are possibly those of the word *shame* (*bóshcth*), i.e. Baal; the word should in all likelihood be spelled Mélech, the ordinary word for "King," as in Is. lvii. 9, or Milk, the Phœnician form which occurs in many Phœnician proper names. Molech is thus not a proper name, but one applicable to any chief god, whether Baal or another.

The construction of the clause is difficult. Two classes of persons cannot be meant: viz. such as worship and swear to Jehovah, and such as swear by their King. One class of persons is described, those who worship Jehovah and also swear by their King, doing homage both to Jehovah and Molech. Ezekiel refers to such persons, ch. xxiii. 37 ff., "For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it" (*v.* 39).

6. In this verse two classes of persons are described: those who have turned away from Jehovah, and those who have never sought Him. Comp. the prophet's exhortation ch. ii. 2, "seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth."

7. *Hold thy peace...Lord* GOD] lit. *the Lord Jehovah.* The divine name Jehovah was not pronounced in the synagogue reading, the word Lord (R.V. in that case LORD) being substituted for it; but when the actual word Lord (*Adonai*) stood beside Jehovah then the reader substituted God (R.V. GOD) for Jehovah. The prophet vividly realises the presence of Jehovah. He is present in the day of the Lord which is at hand. And before His presence the prophet exclaims to men, *Hush!* Hab. ii. 20, Zech. ii. 13, Am. vi. 10. The "day of the Lord" is not merely some great calamity or judgement which the prophet feels to be impending, it is always Jehovah's manifestation of Himself in fulness, and the judgement is the final and universal one. The coming of "the day of the Lord" was an ancient idea of the prophets (Hos. iv. 3; Is. ii. 12 ff.) and even of the people (Am. v. 18); it was a belief older than any written prophecy, as the passage in Amos shews, and later prophets (Is. xiii. 6 ff.; Zeph. i. 7 ff.; Joel i. 15, ii. 1) only amplify the details of the idea. Possibly the expression originated in the idea of a day of victory (cf. "the day of Midian," Is. ix. 4). In its earliest use it was regarded as denoting God's intervention in favour of Israel against their enemies. As such it was a "day to be desired" (Amos *l.c.*). But Amos gave the expression a new significance when he spoke of "the day of the Lord" as God's judgement upon Israel. The presentiment of its *nearness* was often awakened in the prophet's mind by severe

the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath pre-
8 pared a sacrifice, he hath sanctified his guests. And it

visitations of Providence (Joel), or by great convulsions among the nations (Is. xiii.; Zeph. i.). Jehovah was so visibly present in these events that the presentiment could not be repressed that they were the tokens and heralds of His final manifestation of Himself, when His glory would be revealed and all flesh should see it together. Of course the prophet's presentiment was not realised, the impending judgement passed over, and the day of the Lord was delayed. But this fact should not lead us to suppose that the prophets call any great visitation of God by the name of "the day of the Lord."

prepared a sacrifice] The sacrifice, which is Israel, is slain, and the guests who are to eat of the sacrificial meat are invited. The destruction of Israel is so certain that it is conceived as already accomplished.

he hath sanctified his guests] The guests are the foes who shall devour Israel. In ancient times slaughter of animals even for food was a kind of sacrificial act, as the blood and part of the flesh were offered to God, and only those who were clean could partake of the sacrificial meal (1 Sam. xx. 26); hence some consecration or preparation on the part of the guests was necessary, such as washing the clothes, in order to "sanctify" themselves (1 Sam. xvi. 5). The Lord has sanctified His guests who are to eat His sacrifice (Is. xiii. 3). Comp. the same idea Is. xxxiv. 6; Jer. xlvi. 10; Ezek. xxxix. 17, though in Ezek. the guests bidden to the Lord's sacrifice are the birds of every sort and the beasts of the field. There is a certain inconsistency in the figure: of course the foes are those who slay Israel, the sacrifice, but the figure represents Jehovah as slaying and preparing the sacrifice, which the guests consume. But "the only essential feature of the figure is the picture of Judah as a sacrificial victim about to experience the punitive wrath of Yahweh. The remaining features are but accessory circumstances" (Powis Smith). The metaphor shews that some particular assailant of Israel is in the prophet's view, just as in Is. xiii. 3. See Introduction, § 1.

8—13. THE CLASSES IN JERUSALEM ON WHICH THE JUDGEMENT WILL FALL.

The errors and sins assailed by Zephaniah are the same as those attacked by earlier prophets, e.g. (1) the false worship, *vv.* 4—6, cf. Am. iv. 4 ff.; Is. i. 11 ff.; (2) the civil wrong and injustice, *v.* 9, cf. Am. v. 7, 10—13; Is. iii. 12—15, v. 8, 23; (3) dissatisfaction with the idea of the theocratic state and its place among the nations, and consequent assumption of foreign manners, *v.* 8, cf. Is. ii. 6, viii. 6 (they reject the waters of Shiloah that go softly), though possibly the *luxury* of foreign apparel may also be stigma-

shall come to pass in the day of the LORD's sacrifice, that I will [1]punish the princes, and the king's sons, and all such as are clothed with foreign apparel. And in that 9
day I will [1]punish all those that leap over the threshold, which fill their master's house with violence and deceit.

[1] Heb. *visit upon.*

tized (Am. vi. 3–7); and (4) religious indifference and insensibility to the operations of Jehovah, *v.* 12, cf. Am. vi. 1, 13, 14; Is. v. 11, 12, vi. 9, 10, xxix. 9–12, the result of which was an absorbing devotion to secular business, *v.* 11, cf. Am. viii. 5.

8. *I will punish the princes*] lit. *visit upon* the princes. The princes are the nobles, particularly those entrusted with judicial and similar offices.

the king's sons] The sons of the king are the royal house in general, hardly Josiah's own sons, who in the eighteenth year of his reign were aged ten and twelve (2 Kings xxiii. 31, 36). For "sons" the LXX reads *house* of the king, a reading which at least suggests the right meaning. The words "children" ("sons") and "house" are occasionally confused. The LXX reads "house" where Heb. has "children" in Jer. xvi. 15; Ezek. ii. 3; 1 Chron. ii. 10, and on the other hand it reads "children" where Heb. has "house" ("household") in Gen. xlv. 11; Ex. xvi. 31; Josh. xvii. 17, xviii. 5; Hos. i. 7.

clothed with foreign apparel] The aristocracy had evidently given themselves over to foreign (esp. Assyrian) fashions in their dress. For this denunciation of foreign fashions cf. Is. ii. 6. It is noticeable that the king himself is not included in this censure.

9. *those that leap over the threshold*] The priests of Dagon avoided treading on the threshold of his temple because the idol had fallen upon it (1 Sam. v. 5). The connexion here may imply rather an act of violence, suggesting forcible invasion of the house; if so, the next clause, "that fill their master's house with violence," is a further description of those that leap over the threshold. But more probably there is an allusion to the widespread belief that the threshold was a particularly dangerous part of the house, as being the abode of some demon. So in Roman weddings the bride was carried across the threshold of her husband's house, cf. Catullus, lxi. 166 ff.:

> Transfer omine cum bono
> Limen aureolos pedes,
> Rasilemque subi forem.

fill their master's house] i.e. the king's house. Verses 8 and 9 seem to have a common subject, the princes and king's sons, that is, the officers of the king and the members of the royal family. Probably persons belonging to the collateral branches of the royal house filled judicial and other offices in the government.

10 And in that day, saith the LORD, there shall be the noise
of a cry from the fish gate, and an howling from the
[1]second quarter, and a great crashing from the hills.
11 Howl, ye inhabitants of [2]Maktesh, for all [3]the people of

[1] Heb. *Mishneh.* [2] Or, *The mortar* [3] Or, *the merchant people*

violence and deceit] Or, *wrong and fraud.* The words do not mean that wrong and fraud are committed *in* the house of the king, but that his house is filled with the proceeds of such things, cf. Is. iii. 14, 15. What is alluded to is the perversion of justice practised by the princes and the royal family for purposes of gain. At a later time Ezek. makes a similar complaint against the princes and royal house (ch. xxii. 25—29. In *v.* 25 read *princes*).

10. *the fish gate*] The gate may have received its name from its vicinity to the fishmarket. From Neh. iii. 1—3 it appears that the fishgate lay to the west of the tower of Hananeel; and in Neh. xii. 39 the procession starting from the south-west of the city and going round the walls north and east passed successively the gate of Ephraim, the old gate, the fishgate, the tower of Hananeel and the tower of Meah, halting at the sheepgate, which was near the Temple. The fishgate therefore was situated in the northern wall of the city, probably not far from the N.W. angle of the walls. In the days of Nehemiah (xiii. 16), and possibly in the time of Zephaniah, the fishmongers were Tyrians, and their commodity was, no doubt, dried fish.

an howling from the second quarter] i.e. of the city. The second quarter may have been so called from its having been recently added to the city. In 2 Chron. xxxiii. 14 Manasseh is said to have built an outer wall extending as far as the fishgate. The second quarter in all likelihood lay on the north of the city; according to 2 Kings xxii. 14 the prophetess Huldah had her house there. In Neh. xi. 9 the correct rendering is probably "was over the city, the second quarter." For the division of post-exilic Jerusalem into two quarters cf. Neh. iii. 9, 12.

great crashing from the hills] lit. *great breach.* The crashing is scarcely the noise of falling buildings, the expression seems rather to be elliptical for *a cry of great destruction* (Is. xv. 5), parallel to "cry" and "howling" in the two previous clauses. The "hills" referred to are those on which Jerusalem was built, though especially those of the northern quarter.

11. *ye inhabitants of Maktesh*] The term *Maktesh*, which nowhere else occurs as a proper name, is rendered "hollow place," Judg. xv. 19, and *mortar*, Prov. xxvii. 22. Some depression or valley in the city is referred to: Hitzig thinks of that between Acra and the Temple area, and others (following Josephus) of the valley of the Tyropœon or cheese-makers, a depression, now filled up with the rubbish of many centuries, which ran from north to

Canaan are undone: all they that were laden with silver
are cut off. And it shall come to pass at that time, that 12
I will search Jerusalem with [1]candles; and I will [2]punish
the men that are [3]settled on their lees, that say in their

[1] Heb. *lamps.* [2] Heb. *visit upon.* [3] Or, *thickened*

south, dividing the city into two parts. The Targum understands by it the Kidron valley, which runs E. and S.E. of the city. But the probability is that the Maktesh lay in the northern part of the city. It was on this side that Jerusalem was most liable to attack, and the prophet has in view throughout an invasion by a foe from the North.

all the people of Canaan] The Canaanites and Phœnicians were the chief traders in Palestine, and the name Canaan came to be used for merchant. It is scarcely actual Canaanites that are referred to here; already in Hos. xii. 7 the term Canaan is applied figuratively to Ephraim, and in Ezek. xvi. 29, xvii. 4, Chaldea is called the "land of Canaan," i.e. the merchant land. In Is. xxiii. 8 the word Canaan seems to be used in the plur., and certainly in a figurative sense: "whose (Tyre's) traffickers are the honourable of the earth." In Prov. xxxi. 24 the form *Canaanite* is used for merchant, and so perhaps Job xli. 6 (Heb. xl. 30); Zech. xiv. 21.

are undone] Cf. Is. vi. 5; the word is usually rendered *cut off*, Hos. x. 7, 15.

all they that were laden with silver] Or, *money*. The reference is not to the trade of silversmiths, but rather to merchants in general. The verb rendered "laden with" does not occur again. Powis Smith would render actively "those who weigh out money," but this meaning is doubtful.

12. *I will search Jerusalem with candles*] lit. *with lamps*, or, *lanterns*, Luke xv. 8. The darkest places shall be penetrated and those lurking in them discovered. Jehovah searches, though it may be by the hand of the enemy that He performs the search. It is out of these obscurest places that the men settled on their lees will have to be dragged. These are not enthusiasts who throng public places and are always in the light of day; they are the indifferent, who withdraw from public concerns, who have no zeal because no faith. In the pictures of Zephaniah as a saint he is represented carrying a lantern.

settled on their lees] Rather, **thickened**. The verb occurs again in Ex. xv. 8 (R.V. "were congealed"), Job x. 10 (R.V. "curdled"). The figure is taken from wine that has sat long undisturbed, and is finely expanded in Jer. xlviii. 11, 12, "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel....I will send unto him them that pour off, and they shall pour him off." Those referred to are men who have lived at ease, without trouble or vicissitude in life, and who have therefore sunk down into unfeeling indifference or even

heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil.
13 And their wealth shall become a spoil, and their houses a
desolation: yea, they shall build houses, but shall not
inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, but shall

into incredulity regarding any interference of a higher power in the affairs of mankind (next clause). The metaphor is clear. New wine was left upon its lees only long enough to fix its colour and body. If not then drawn off it grew thick and syrupy—sweeter indeed than the strained wine, and to the taste of some more pleasant, but feeble and ready to decay. "To settle upon the lees became a proverb for sloth, indifference, and the muddy mind" (G. A. Smith).

The LORD will not do good] The phrase "do good or do evil" (Is. xli. 23) has come to mean little more than "do anything," but it is also used in a literal way; Jer. x. 5. "Be not afraid of them (the idols), for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good." An Arab. poet says: "I sing a man, on whom the sun never rose a day but he did good and did evil," i.e. to his friends and foes respectively. The persons referred to by the prophet say this "in their hearts." The saying differs little from the other, "There is no God" (Ps. xiv. 1), no living God who observes and interposes in the affairs of human life. Though in a different atmosphere of thought Renan expresses himself to the same effect: "it has, in fact, never been established by observation that a superior being troubles himself, for a moral or an immoral purpose, with the things of nature or the affairs of mankind" (*Hist. of Israel*, ii. p. xi).

13. The verse implies that the "search" (*v.* 12) is made by the foe under commission of the Lord; the foe is in quest of spoil, but his acts are the Lord's "visitation" on the unbelieving.

they shall build houses &c.] The phrase is a common one signifying that they shall not enjoy the fruit of their labour. Comp. Am. v. 11; Mic. vi. 15; Deut. xxviii. 30, 39; Is. lxv. 21, 22.

14—18. THE TERRORS OF THE DAY OF THE LORD.

The day of the Lord is described as a day of battle and assault upon the fenced cities, but also as a day of darkness and supernatural terrors. In Arabic the term "day" often means "battle-day," as the "day of Bedr," and this may have been its original application in Hebrew; cf. Is. ix. 4, "in the day of Midian[1]." The day of the Lord is the day of His self-revelation to judge evil and bring His work of redemption among men to completion. On the one side His revelation of Himself fills men with terror and anguish, on the other side it is the cause of universal gladness, for the oppressions under which the world groaned come to an end and the reign of God begins: "The Lord is King! let the earth rejoice, let

[1] We might compare the German toast of *Der Tag*.

not drink the wine thereof. The great day of the LORD is 14
near, it is near and hasteth greatly, *even* the voice of the
day of the LORD; the mighty man crieth there bitterly.
That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, 15
a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and

the multitude of the isles be glad...for he cometh to rule the earth; he shall rule the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity" (Ps. xcvii. 1, xcviii. 9). Sometimes the terrors of the day of the Lord are represented as due to His manifestation of Himself and the convulsions of nature that accompany His appearing, "when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth" (Is. ii. 10—22); at other times, besides the supernatural gloom and terrors that surround Him when He appears, He is represented as using some terrible distant nation as the instrument by which He executes His judgement (Is. xiii., and the present passage). The judgement of the day of the Lord is a judgement on the known world, on Israel and the historical nations lying within its horizon, and the nation that executes the judgement is some fierce and wild people emerging from the dark places of the earth lying beyond the confines of the known world. There is thus a certain inconsistency in the representation: though the judgement be universal, the nation that executes it does not come within its scope.

14. *The great day of the* LORD *is near*] The day is called "great and terrible," Joel ii. 31, Mal. iv. 5, and is always represented as near, Is. xiii. 6; Joel ii. 1, 11 (see notes on *v.* 7).

even *the voice of the day*] Rather as an exclamation: **hark! the day of the Lord!** or, **the sound of the day of the Lord!**

crieth there bitterly] lit. *crieth out there*—the scene being before the prophet's view. It is not necessary to take *there* in a temporal sense, *then*, a meaning not quite certain even in Prov. viii. 17 (cf. Judg. v. 11; Hos. x. 9; Ps. xiv. 5, lxvi. 6, cxxxiii. 3). As to the idea expressed comp. Is. xiii. 7, 8, "all hands shall be feeble, and every heart of man shall melt; and they shall be dismayed." Jer. xxx. 5—7. With "crieth bitterly" cf. Is. xxxiii. 7, "the ambassadors of peace weep bitterly."

15. *a day of wrath*] i.e. of the outpouring of the wrath of God. The effects of this wrath are then detailed: (1) trouble and distress; (2) wasteness and desolation; (3) darkness and gloominess, clouds and thick darkness. The combination "trouble and distress" is found again Job xv. 24; cf. Is. xxx. 6; "wasteness" or devastation "and desolation," Job xxxviii. 27; and the phrase "a day of darkness" &c., Joel ii. 2. Cf. Is. xiii. 10; Am. v. 18. These supernatural terrors are not to be regarded as figures, they are realities; the world is a human and moral world: nature is convulsed and dissolved in man's judgement, and transfigured and glorified in his redemption. The first words of the Vulgate translation of this

16 gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of
the trumpet and alarm, against the fenced cities, and
17 against the high [1]battlements. And I will bring distress
upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because
they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall
18 be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung. Neither
their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in
the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be

[1] Or, *corner towers*

verse, *Dies iræ dies illa*, were adopted by Thomas of Celano as the opening words of his splendid hymn on the Last Judgement. See Trench, *Sacred Latin Poetry*, p. 296.

16. Besides the supernatural terrors of the judgement there is the hostile assault which the supernatural terrors accompany.

a day of the trumpet and alarm] The "trumpet" was blown amidst the attack (Judg. vii. 19; Am. iii. 6), as now martial music accompanies the advance. Am. ii. 2, "Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet." The word "alarm" here is that rendered "shouting," Am. i. 14, ii. 2, in accordance with its literal sense "to arms!" (Ital. *all' arme*). The "shouting" (*terû'ah*), originally that of battle (Jer. iv. 19), became in later and more peaceful times the shout of the glad worshippers on the feast days (Ezr. iii. 11—13).

17. The distress, though at first outward, leads to inward perplexity, when men can find no outlet or way, and grope like the blind. The comparison is a frequent one to express perplexity and helplessness: Deut. xxviii. 29, "thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness"; Is. lix. 10. Here the perplexity is secondary, due to the paralysing calamities of the judgement; but in other cases by moral laws that operate invisibly moral confusion and perplexity invade the mind through sin. On the last part of the verse comp. Ps. lxxix. 3, lxxxiii. 10; Jer. ix. 22, xvi. 4. The word translated *flesh* (again only Job xx. 23) has been rendered by others, *inwards*, *bowels* (Frd. Delitzsch, *Prolegomena*, p. 193), but this sense is less probable.

18. The idea of the verse is illustrated in Prov. xi. 4, "Riches profit not in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivereth from death," cf. Ezek. vii. 19. The instruments also whom Jehovah employs to execute His judgements are sometimes animated by a loftiness of purpose and mind that despises mere earthly treasures: "Behold, I stir up the Medes against them, which regard not silver, and as for gold they delight not in it" (Is. xiii. 17). Yet Herodotus says that the Scythians, when on the borders of Egypt, were bought off by a great sum of money.

the whole land] Rather, **the whole earth**; ch. iii. 8.

devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make an end, yea, a [1]terrible end, of all them that dwell in the land.

Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O 2
nation that hath no [2]shame; before the decree bring forth, 2

[1] Or, *speedy* [2] Or, *longing*

devoured by the fire of his jealousy] "Jealousy" means *heat*, and may refer to any violent emotion, as military ardour (Is. xlii. 13); usually it means the strong reaction or self-assertion of the mind against an injury. If the term have this special sense here it is explained by the words "they have sinned against Jehovah" (*v.* 17). The figure of jealousy here is that of a fire devouring the whole earth. The words are repeated iii. 8.

make an end, yea, a terrible end] Or, as marg., *a speedy end*. For the form of the expression cf. Is. x. 23. The chapter ends with announcing anew the universal destruction threatened in *vv.* 2, 3.

Ch. II.

1—3. Exhortation to men to seek righteousness, if perchance they may be hid in the day of the Lord.

1. The prophet addresses himself to Judah.

Gather yourselves together] The sense is obscure. The verb (*ḳash*) is used of gathering *straw*, Ex. v. 12, *sticks*, Numb. xv. 32, 1 Kings xvii. 10, 12, and does not otherwise occur. It is very doubtful if the word could be used in a metaphorical or mental sense, *collect yourselves*, that is, reflect, that ye may understand and repent. Rothstein (in Kautzsch's Bible) suggests a root *ḳûsh*, and renders, *Bow yourselves and be bowed*, but the Arabic verb on which he bases this sense (*ḳâwisa*, 5 *taḳâwwasa*) is a denominative from *ḳaus*, "a bow," and does not mean to bow down but to be bow-shaped, or curved in the back. With more plausibility Ewald appealed to the Aramaic word signifying *to be old* (*ḳâsh*), assuming that the primary sense of the word was *to be* (become) *withered*, grey in colour. If this primary sense could be established his rendering *turn pale!* i.e. be ashamed, might be accepted, as it would agree very well with the next clause. Cheyne, followed by Budde and Driver, proposes at once to read *be ashamed* (root, *bôsh*), but if this common word had originally stood in the text it is not easy to understand how the present difficult reading could have arisen. There is a similarly obscure word in Is. xlvi. 8.

O nation that hath no shame] Marg. *longing*. The latter is the normal meaning of the root in Hebrew, but the sense of "shame" is found in Aramaic and in colloquial Arabic. The primary meaning is supposed to be "to be pale" or "white": hence the common word for "silver," i.e. the pale metal. But the meaning "long for" has probably no connexion with this idea. See G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, ii. 59 f.

[1]*before* the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger
of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD's
3 anger come upon you. Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek
of the earth, which have wrought his judgement; seek
righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid

[1] Or, (*the day passeth as the chaff,*)

2. The verse is probably in some disorder: the first two clauses can hardly present the original text, and the last two clauses look like duplicates of one another.

before the decree bring forth] The "decree" is God's purpose, the determined day of the Lord, and its "bringing forth" would mean, its giving birth to its contents or effects. This is rather unnatural language; a different construction would be more probable: *Before the decree be brought forth*, given birth to or revealed. Powis Smith suggests "before ye become fine dust" (*beṭérem tihyu l*ᵉ*dhaq*).

before *the day pass as the chaff*] Neither this nor marg. gives a satisfactory sense, for it is the coming of the judgement, and not its passing away that is emphasized. Probably "day" is misplaced here, and the words are merely a continuation of the first clause "before ye become...as chaff that passeth away."

Instead of *chaff* (*mts*) the LXX reads *flower* (*nts*), rendering the first two clauses of the verse, *Before ye become as the flower that passes away.*

The last clause, "day of the anger of the Lord," looks like an explanation of the more general words, "the fierceness of the anger of the Lord" in the previous clause. The Hexaplar Syriac translation indicates that the last clause was not original in the LXX; on the other hand, a corrector in the Sinaitic MS. (Swete, ℵc. b) suggests omission of the preceding clause.

3. *all ye meek of the earth*] Better, **humble**, for the term denotes an attitude towards God, rather than towards men. Though the exhortation to seek the Lord (Am. v. 6; Is. lv. 6) be addressed specially to the prophet's own people of Judah, there is no necessity for rendering, meek of the *land*. The "meek" are those humble before Jehovah, cf. iii. 12; they are further described as those that do His judgement or *ordinance*, that is, obey in life the statutes of the Lord. They are exhorted to renew, or to continue more importunately, their seeking of the Lord in face of the approaching day of trouble.

it may be ye shall be hid] The figure is that of finding refuge from a storm passing over, or a foe sweeping past. Is. xxvi. 20, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers;...hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast"; Job xiv. 13, "Oh that thou wouldst hide me in Sheôl, that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past." Even amidst what looks like absolute certainty of the divine judgement, the prophets cannot

in the day of the LORD's anger. For Gaza shall be for-
saken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out
Ashdod at the noonday, and Ekron shall be rooted up.

renounce the idea of the possibility of the people's repenting and averting the impending wrath; cf. Jer. vii. 5—7, xxvi. 3, xxxvi. 3, 5; Am. v. 6, 15.

4—15. THE JUDGEMENT OF THE DAY OF THE LORD UPON THE NATIONS.

The nations on whom the impending judgement shall fall are: (1) the Philistines (*vv.* 4—7); (2) Moab and Ammon (*vv.* 8—11); (3) Cush or the Ethiopians (*v.* 12); and (4) Assyria (*vv.* 13—15). In relation to Judah the four nations named lay respectively west, east, south, and north. The passage appears to be written in the rhythm of the *ḳinah* or elegy, though in some verses the rhythm is imperfect. Comp. Ezekiel xix. *Cambridge Bible*, and more fully, Budde in the *Zeitsch. fur Altest. Wissensch.* 1882, to whom is due the merit of discovering the true nature of the elegiac rhythm. See also Budde's article "Poetry" in *H.D.B.*

4. *For Gaza shall be forsaken*] The connecting word *for* appears to refer to the exhortation in *v.* 3: seek the Lord, it may be ye shall be hid, for many shall be overwhelmed. There is an assonance in the words "Gaza shall be forsaken" (*'azza 'azûba*) which cannot be reproduced. "Forsaken" is used probably as in Is. vi. 12, vii. 16, in the sense of depopulated. There is a similar paronomasia in "Ekron shall be rooted up" (*'eḳron te'ākēr*), which the Greek is able partially to imitate, Ἀκκαρὼν ἐκριζωθήσεται. For other instances of the same figure cf. Ezek. xxv. 16; Micah i. 10 ff.; Am. v. 5. Compare also the well-known story of Pope Gregory and the Angle slaves in Rome.

drive out Ashdod at the noonday] "Drive out" can only be used of the inhabitants of a city. Schwally suggests to alter one consonant and gain the sense "root up." The expression *at noonday* occurs again Jer. xv. 8 (vi. 4 is different) and stands in parallelism with *suddenly* in the next clause. It is also curious that in Jer. xv. 8, "a spoiler at noonday," the term *spoiler* (*shoded*) would form an assonance with Ashdod. The idea meant to be suggested by the phrase "at noonday" is not clear. The usual explanation, to the effect that, as the hot noon was the time when men rested in the East, an attack at such an hour would be unexpected, is rather puerile (1 Kings xx. 16). The idea might rather be that Ashdod shall be stormed by sheer and open force. "If this latter view be correct, there is probably an allusion here by way of contrast to the siege of Ashdod by Psamtik I. which is said to have lasted twenty-nine years, and, if so, was in progress when these words were spoken" (Powis Smith). See *Appendix*.

The Philistine towns are enumerated in their order from south

5 Woe unto the inhabitants of [1]the sea coast, the nation of
the Cherethites! The word of the LORD is against you,
O Canaan, the land of the Philistines; I will destroy thee,
6 that there shall be no inhabitant. And the sea coast shall
be pastures, with [2]cottages for shepherds and folds for

[1] Or, *the region of the sea* [2] Or, *caves*

to north. The first three lay near the coast, while Ekron was somewhat further inland. Gath, the fifth Philistine town, no longer existed at this time.

5. *the sea coast*] Or, **the region by the sea**. The word "coast" is strictly an archaism here being derived from Lat. *costa*, "rib," Fr. côte, "side," hence "border" or "region." Outside this chapter the R.V. always alters to "border" (see Driver, *ad loc.*). The reference is to the strip of territory belonging to the Philistines; Ezek. xxv. 16. The Cherethites are the Philistines, or at least those along the coast (1 Sam. xxx. 14). The word is supposed to have some relation to Crete, from which it appears that the Philistines migrated into Palestine. In Am. ix. 7, Deut. ii. 23, Jer. xlvii. 4 the Philistines are said to have come from Caphtor, which is generally understood to be Crete. See Powis Smith's note on the present passage, and note on Am. ix. 7 in *C.B.S.* In 2 Sam. viii. 18 the Cherethites and Pelethites (Philistines?) appear as mercenaries among David's household troops. According to Josh. xiii. 3, 4, the territory of the Philistines was reckoned to the Canaanites.

6. The text of *v.* 6 is probably in disorder, as the rhythmical balance of the verse is quite obscured. The LXX also read differently, the words *the sea coast* being wanting in their text. These words should probably be omitted as a marginal explanation of *it*, and the verse read, *and it* (land of the Philistines, *v.* 5) *shall be pastures*. As the text stands the verb is fem., while "coast" is masc.

pastures, with cottages for shepherds] Marg. or, *caves*. The word rendered "cottages" (*k'rôth*) is obscure. Bochart, whom Keil follows, suggested that the word was *infin.* of the verb "to dig," and rendered "for digging," supposing that the reference was to subterranean huts dug by the shepherds to escape the heat (hence R.V. marg., *caves*). The idea has no probability. The peculiar construction (which appears similar to that in Job xx. 17, *the floods, the brooks* of honey) suggests that "dwellings" and "cottages" are mere variant expressions, having the same meaning. So Hitzig: *shall be for meadows of pastures* for shepherds. The sense of *pasture* is seen, Is. xxx. 23, though the plur. is *masc.* Ps. lxv. 13, while in the present passage the word is *fem.* It is possible, indeed, that the word is a mere transcriptional duplicate of the preceding word, as the letters forming the two words are frequently

flocks. And the coast shall be for the remnant of the 7
house of Judah; they shall feed *their flocks* thereupon: in
the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening;
for the LORD their God shall visit them, and bring again
their captivity. I have heard the reproach of Moab, and 8

confused. The term, however, stood in the text of the LXX, who rendered it *Crete*, i.e. the country of the Cherethites: *and Crete shall be a pasture* (*n'vath*) *of shepherds*. Either the order of words was different in the text of the LXX, or they translated in entire disregard of Shemitic grammar. The verse with very slight correction may read:

And it shall be pastures of rams feeding, and folds of flocks.

7. The promise of the surrounding countries to Israel as its possession is more common in later writings; Obad. *v*. 19 ff.; Zech. ix. 7; but comp. already Am. ix. 12; Is. xi. 14; Jer. xlix. 2. The clause "And the coast... Judah" is however omitted by many editors (Marti, Duhm, Powis Smith, &c.).

bring again their captivity] The phrase is not infrequently used metaphorically, e.g. *restore their prosperity* (Job xlii. 10), or, *turn their fortunes*, Hos. vi. 11; Am. ix. 14. It does not necessarily imply that the Exile had taken place.

8—11. MOAB AND AMMON.

The section is treated as a later insertion by G. A. Smith, Marti, Powis Smith, &c., and is generally regarded as post-exilic. Marti would even assign 9 *b*, 10 to Maccabean times It may be admitted that *v*. 11 comes in awkwardly and "agrees badly with its context" (Driver), but the rest of the section may still be ascribed to Zephaniah. The arguments against Zephaniah's authorship are (i) the difference in rhythm, (ii) the oracle against Philistia would most naturally be followed by the oracle on Egypt (*v*. 12) as the next country geographically, (iii) the conduct of Moab and Ammon is best attributed to the occasion of the captivity of Judah, cf. Obad. 10—14, (iv) the expressions "residue of my people," "remnant of my nation" (*v*. 12) presuppose the Exile. Against these contentions it may be urged (i) that arguments from rhythm are still somewhat precarious in our present state of knowledge of the subject, (ii) that *v*. 12 deals with Ethiopians not Egyptians, and not neighbours of the Philistines, (iii) that Moab and Ammon were constantly performing acts of hostility against Judah, (iv) that the expressions "residue" and "remnant" may refer to the loss to the entire nation caused by the captivity of N. Israel.

8. *I have heard the reproach of Moab*] It is the Lord who speaks. The "reproach" or contempt of Moab is most likely that expressed in words, not that exhibited in insulting deeds; cf. Jer. xlviii.

the revilings of the children of Ammon, wherewith they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border. Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, a possession of [1]nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the

[1] Or, *wild vetches*

27—29; Ezek. xxxv. 12. Is. xvi. 6, "We have heard of the prid of Moab, that he is very proud; even of his arrogancy, his pride and his wrath."

revilings of the children of Ammon] These revilings seem also to denote spoken obloquy (Ezek. xxi. 28), though the term is also used of opprobrious deeds, Numb. xv. 30; Ezek. xx. 27. Comp. Ezek. xxv. 3, 6, 8, "Because thou saidst, Aha! against my sanctuary, when it was profaned."

wherewith they have reproached...and magnified themselves] Rather: **wherewith...and they have magnified their border**. The phrase *have magnified themselves* &c. is scarcely explanatory either of "reproach" or "revilings," but expresses an additional delinquency—they have presumptuously violated the border of Israel and seized his territory. The charge is an old one against Ammon: Am. i. 13, "They have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border"; Jer. xlix. 1, "Hath Israel no sons? hath he no heir? why then doth Malcam possess Gad?" Moab also, whenever possible, overstepped what Israel regarded as its frontier and took possession of the territory of Reuben and Gad, as appears from the Moabite Stone. After Israel beyond Jordan was carried captive by Tiglath-pileser (B.C. 734), and especially after the fall of the northern kingdom (722), Moab and other peoples would naturally overflow the depopulated districts. For "*their* border" the LXX has "*my* borders"; cf. Jer. xlviii. 26, 42, "he (Moab) hath magnified himself against the Lord."

9. Jehovah's oath by Himself, *as I live*, is rare in early writings, but very common in Ezekiel.

Moab shall be as Sodom] The vicinity of the two peoples or at least of Moab to the Dead Sea may have suggested the threat that the fate of the cities of the plain shall overtake them. For allusions to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrha cf. Deut. xxix. 23; Is. i. 9, xiii. 19 &c.

a possession of nettles] The translation "nettles" is not certain and a similar word in Syrian means "vetch," but obviously the word denotes some kind of plant growing in waste land, Prov. xxiv. 31; Job xxx. 7; Is. xxxiv. 13.

and saltpits] These were common around the Dead Sea: Deut. xxix. 23; cf. Is. xiii. 19; Jer. xlix. 18. The idea suggested is that

residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my nation shall inherit them. This shall they have for 10 their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the LORD of hosts. The 11 LORD will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the [1]isles of the nations. Ye 12

[1] Or, *coastlands*

of utter barrenness. To sow with salt was a symbolical act, signifying to doom to perpetual unfruitfulness and desolation (Judg. ix. 45).

shall spoil them] i.e. make a spoil of them, viz. Moab and Ammon. There is a certain inconsistency in the verse, which is not to be removed by drawing a distinction between the *country* of Moab and Ammon and the peoples themselves, and fancying that the country shall share the fate of Sodom, while the peoples become the servants of Israel (Hitzig). It is better to consider the prophet's predictions to be ideal, and to threaten two fates to Moab and Ammon, one, destruction like Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other, absorption by Israel.

10. For the pride of Moab cf. *v.* 8, Is. xvi. 6, Jer. xlviii. 29, and for the general expression cf. 2 Kings xix. 22. In the last clause the LXX reads: *magnified themselves against the Lord of hosts*, omitting *people*. Jer. xlviii. 26, 42.

11. *will be terrible unto them*] lit. *over* them. Mal. i. 14, "I am a great king,...and my name is terrible among the nations." For "terrible" the LXX reads, *will appear*.

he will famish all the gods] lit., as A.V. marg., *make lean* (Is. xvii. 4). Hitzig, followed by Keil, thinks the meaning to be, that by destroying all the nations the Lord will make lean or enfeeble all their gods, for the vigour of the god is proportionate to the robustness and power of the nation. This kind of reflection is not likely to have passed through the mind of the prophet. His idea appears to be that by terrible deeds Jehovah will make Himself known to the nations, who will fear Him alone, perceiving the impotency of their former gods; comp. Is. ii. 20, xxx. 22, and Ezek. xxv. ff. The use of the term *make lean* in regard to gods is certainly strange. "Despise" has been suggested as an emendation.

every one from his place] i.e. each individual person, not each nation. The phrase "from his place" seems to mean, every one where he dwells, the idea being that, without making pilgrimages to Jerusalem (Is. ii. 3; Zech. viii. 22, xiv. 16), the peoples shall worship Jehovah, every man in his own land (Mal. i. 11). The prep. *from* might have a pregnant sense, each *coming from* his place, but this meaning is decidedly less natural. G. A. Smith

13 Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by my sword. And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry
14 like the wilderness. And herds shall lie down in the midst of her, [1]all the beasts of the nations: both the pelican

[1] Or, *all beasts of* every *kind*

thinks that "place" may have its Arabic meaning of "holy place," "sanctuary."

the isles of the nations] The term "isles" appears to have been applied to the island-like coasts of the Mediterranean, and then to have been used of distant countries in general, Is. xli. 1, lix. 18; Ezek. xxxix. 6.

12. Threat against Ethiopia.

Ethiopia or Cush was the country lying south of Egypt. Stretching from Syene (Assouan) southward, it corresponded to Nubia and the modern Soudan. Its capital is supposed to have lain near the 4th Cataract, on the great western bend of the Nile, about midway between Abu Hamed and Old Donkola. From about B.C. 720 to 654 an Ethiopian dynasty had reigned over Egypt, and Powis Smith suggests that Zephaniah may call the Egyptians Ethiopians in scornful allusion to their long subjection.

ye shall be slain] lit. *are the slain of my sword*, Is. lxvi. 16. Comp. Jer. xxv. 33. The words are a prediction.

13—15. Threat against Assyria.

The passage naturally implies that the Assyrian empire had not yet fallen.

13. *stretch out his hand*] See on i. 4.

against the north] Assyria lay actually N.E. of Judah, but an invading force would descend upon Judah from the N., crossing the Euphrates at Carchemish.

14. *all the beasts of the nations*] The LXX has *all the beasts of the earth*, as the phrase usually runs (Gen. i. 24; Ps. lxxix. 2), or beasts of the field. The phrase seems to stand in apposition to *flocks*, the idea of which it expands. The word "flocks" seems nowhere to be used of wild creatures, but always of those tended by the shepherd. The term "beasts" is generally used of wild creatures, but in Is. xlvi. 1 it is used of tame animals, and elsewhere of creatures in general. The term *nation* (here *sing.*) is used of locusts (Joel i. 6), just as "people" is used of the ants and conies (Prov. xxx. 25, 26), and many assume that it is so used here, rendering, *all kinds of animals in crowds* (Keil, R.V. marg.). The construction is against such a sense, and it is probable that the original phrase was "all beasts of the field" or possibly "of the valley." On the other hand, Wellhausen appears to take "beasts"

and the porcupine shall lodge in the chapiters thereof: *their* voice shall sing in the windows; [1]desolation shall be in the thresholds: for he hath laid bare the cedar work. This is the joyous city that dwelt carelessly, that said in 15
her heart, I am, and there is none else beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down

[1] Or, *drought*

in a figurative sense, rendering *a motley medley of people*, the reference being to the tribes who own the flocks. But though "beasts" be sometimes used figuratively of peoples, when the idea is to be expressed that they shall attack and devour another people (Is. lvi. 9), in a passage like the present such a sense is entirely unnatural.

both the pelican and the porcupine] The exact meaning of the two nouns is doubtful. The first occurs in Lev. xi. 18, Deut. xiv. 17 (where it is reckoned among the unclean birds), Ps. cii. 6, Is. xxxiv. 11 (where it is spoken of as haunting desolate places). The latter is found in Is. xiv. 23, xxxiv. 11. In Syr. and Arab. it means "hedgehog." The A.V. rendering "bittern" has nothing to recommend it.

the chapiters] i.e. the carved tops of the pillars now flung to the ground, or of those still standing amidst the ruins.

their *voice shall sing*] lit. *a voice that singeth = hark! they sing!* The idea of "singing" is strange; the LXX takes the word in a more general sense of the cry of birds or wild creatures. But instead of "their voice" (*qôl*), there is little doubt that we should read, with Wellhausen and others, "the little owl" (*kôṣ*).

desolation shall be in the thresholds] Instead of "desolation," the LXX (with difference of one letter) reads *ravens*, a reading which many follow. Cf. Is. xxxiv. 11.

he hath laid bare the cedar work] The text is probably in disorder. The term "laid bare" is that rendered *rase* to the foundation, Ps. cxxxvii. 7 (see on Hab. iii. 13). The supposed form rendered "cedar work" does not occur elsewhere. The slightest possible change in pointing would give *her* cedar, which might mean, her cedar work. The word, however, might possibly be some form of the verb *to make lean* (*v.* 11), either 1 pers. impf., *I will make* her *void* and *rase* her (cf. Vulg. *quoniam attenuabo robur eius*), or with Aramaic spelling (as Is. lxiii. 3), 3 pers. perf., *they shall make* (lit. have made) her *void* and *rase* her, which is equivalent to the *passive*, she shall be made void &c. But all this is unsatisfactory.

15. A *ḳinah* or elegy on Nineveh.

there is none beside me] there is **none else**. She felt unique in her power and splendour. The same words are used of herself by Babylon, Is. xlvii. 8.

in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand.

3 Woe to her that is rebellious and polluted, to the op-
2 pressing city! She obeyed not the voice; she received not [1]correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew

[1] Or, *instruction*

shall hiss, and wag his hand] Expressions of scorn and hatred. Ezek. xxvii. 36; Lam. ii. 15, 16; Job xxvii. 23; Nah. iii. 19.

CH. III.

1—8. RENEWED THREAT AGAINST JERUSALEM IN PARTICULAR.

Ch. iii. returns to Jerusalem. The city is reproached as rebellious, polluted, and full of oppression (*v.* 1); disobedient to God and neglectful of His word and of the lessons of His operations in the world of the nations (*v.* 2). All classes within her are corrupt: her princes violent, her judges venal and greedy (*v.* 3), her prophets unstable and false, and her priests profaners of what is holy and perverters of the *Torah* (*v.* 4 ff.).

1. *rebellious and polluted*] The word rendered "rebellious" is regularly used of refusal to obey Jehovah: it may better be translated "defiant." The "pollution" comes from bloodshed (Is. i. 15, "your hands are full of blood"; Ezek. xxiv. 9, "Woe to the bloody city"), but possibly also partly from other sins, cf. Is. iv. 4, "the filth of the daughters of Zion." The term "polluted" is specially connected with blood, Is. lix. 3; Lam. iv. 14.

the oppressing city] The word is used by Jeremiah of the sword, xlvi. 16. Cf. Is. i. 21, "How is the city that was faithful become an harlot! Full of justice, righteousness lodging in her—but now murderers!"

2. *She obeyed not the voice*] i.e. the voice of God by the prophets. Jer. vii. 23, xxii. 21.

she received not correction] Or, *instruction*, Jer. v. 3. Cf. Jer. vii. 28, "This is the nation that hath not hearkened to the voice of the Lord, nor received instruction." Cf. also xxxii. 33.

trusted not in the LORD] Faith was always greatly insisted on by the prophets as the essential part of religion; Is. vii. 9, "if ye will not believe ye shall not be established"; Jer. xvii. 7, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord." Cf. Is. x. 20, xvii. 7, xxx. 18.

3. Every class does evil, each in its own way. A very full parallel is Ezek. xxii. 25—28 (in *v.* 25 read, with LXX, *princes*). The "princes" may be the royal house, or the magnates in whose hands lay the judicial and governing power. Ezek. describing the princes says, they are "like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they take treasure and precious things; they have made her widows many." The "judges" are compared

not near to her God. Her princes in the midst of her are 3
roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they [1]leave
nothing till the morrow. Her prophets are light and 4
treacherous persons: her priests have profaned the sanc-

[1] Or, *gnaw not the bones on the morrow*

to evening wolves (Hab. i. 8), less powerful than the lions, but no less insatiable and murderous. Ezek. xxii. 27, "wolves ravening the prey; to shed blood, and to destroy souls, that they may get dishonest gain." Judicial corruption and murder are often complained of by the prophets; Is. i. 23; Mic. iii. 11; cf. Jer. xxii. 17; Ezek. xxii. 12.

leave nothing till the morrow] The verb occurs Numb. xxiv. 8, where it is evidently a denominative from the noun *gerem* = "bone," and means "gnaw" or "crunch." Hence marg. and A.V. "they gnaw not the bones." In Ezek. xxiii. 34 it may have the same sense, "thou shalt gnaw the sherds thereof." If this is the meaning of the verb here, the general sense will be "they devour everything before the morning." This does not differ materially in sense from the R.V., which is supported by the Versions, though the meaning "leave over" seems to be little more than a guess.

4. *Her prophets are light*] Both the idea and the expression find a parallel in Jer. xxiii. 32, "I am against them that prophesy lying dreams, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their vain boasting" (A.V. lightness); cf. Lam. ii. 14; Ezek. xxii. 28. The figure expressed by "light" is that of the boiling over of water (Gen. xlix. 4; Judg. ix. 4), and the word characterizes the prophets as vapourers, extravagant and arrogant in their own imaginations and conceits, their minds lacking the restraint of the word of God under which the true prophets spoke.

treacherous persons] lit. *men of treacheries*, or, perfidiousnesses. The precise sense is not clear. The verb "to deal treacherously" is often used of falsehood or perfidy toward God; Jer. iii. 20, "as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel"; Hos. vi. 7. The idea, however, that the prophets dealt unfaithfully with God in giving out the imaginations of their own heart as His word to men (Hitzig), is rather strained. In the ethical writings of the Old Testament, such as the Proverbs, "treacherous dealer" is often parallel to "wicked" (Prov. ii. 22, xi. 6, xxi. 18; cf. Hab. i. 13), and means one who acts untruly or wrongfully in regard to moral law. Jeremiah frequently taxes the prophets of his day with immoral conduct (xxiii. 14, xxix. 23).

have profaned the sanctuary] Rather: **that which is holy.** Ezek. xxii. 26 offers a complete parallel: "Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned mine holy things; they have put no difference between the holy and the common, neither have they

5 tuary, they have done violence to the law. The LORD in
the midst of her is righteous; he will not do iniquity;
[1]every morning doth he bring his judgement to light, he
6 faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame. I have
cut off nations, their [2]battlements are desolate; I have
made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their
cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there

[1] Heb. *morning by morning.* [2] Or, *corner towers*

caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean." The last words explain at least one way of doing "violence" or wrong to the law. Jer. ii. 8 makes similar charges against the various official classes.

5. All these wrongs they practise undeterred and uninstructed by the presence and operations of the righteous Lord in the midst of them.

The LORD in the midst of her] Jehovah dwells in the midst of Jerusalem and is seen to be righteous both by His word and works, but the people are insensible and receive no impression from His presence and nature. Jer. xi. 20.

will not do iniquity] Or, **doeth no unrighteousness**; Deut. xxxii. 4.

every morning...his judgement to light] Morning by morning, i.e. every morning, constantly, He brings His just judgement or justice to light; His moral rule is as constant and as visible as the material law that brings in the dawn. Cf. Hos. vi. 5 (read as marg.: *my judgement* goeth forth like the light). The thought is probably taken from the idea of the earthly king or judge disposing each morning of the cases brought before him. Exod. xviii. 13; 2 Sam. xv. 2 f.

the unjust knoweth no shame] The unrighteous, untouched by the righteousness of God and receiving no impression from His rule, though exercised before his eyes, pursues his own unrighteous way with no feeling of shame. Jer. iii. 3, vi. 15, viii. 12.

6. Verse 6 continues the preceding: Jehovah's righteous rule is exercised not only in the midst itself of Israel but also among the nations without. His judgements among the nations were also meant for Israel's instruction, and should have been laid to heart (*v.* 7).

I have cut off nations] No particular nations are named; history is full of God's judgements on the peoples for their unrighteousness, the Flood, the overthrow of Sodom, the destruction of Samaria, and the like.

I have made their streets waste] The examples or some of them are recent. The term "streets" might mean outplaces, territories. On the language of the verse comp. Jer. xxxiii. 10.

is none inhabitant. I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou 7
wilt receive [1]correction; so her dwelling should not be
cut off, [2]*according to* all that I have appointed concerning
her: but they rose early and corrupted all their doings.
Therefore wait ye for me, saith the LORD, until the day 8
that I rise up to the prey: for my [3]determination is to

[1] Or, *instruction* [2] Or, *howsoever I punished her*
[3] Heb. *judgement.*

7. God's purpose in these judgements on the nations was that Israel should take warning from them and receive instruction.

I said] Or, *I thought*; Jer. iii. 19.

according to *all that I have appointed concerning her*] The words seem to explain the preceding "so her dwelling should not be cut off." This destruction of her place of abode is what the Lord has appointed for her. His desire and hope were that she would receive instruction so that her dwelling-place should remain for ever. Instead of "her dwelling-place" the LXX reads "from her eyes" (with a difference of one letter). So Wellhausen: she will receive instruction, *and that which I have commanded her will never be cut off* (fade) *from her sight*, i.e. she will continually keep before her eyes God's commandments. For the meaning "I have commanded her" instead of "appointed concerning her" he cites Job xxxvi. 23; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23; Ezr. i. 2.

rose early and corrupted] i.e. corrupted with eagerness. The phrase is a favourite one with Jeremiah, where it occurs eleven times, e.g. vii. 13, 25, xi. 7 &c.

8. *Therefore wait ye for me*] Elsewhere, except in this passage, only 2 Chr. xxxvi. 15. The expression *wait for me* is not ironical (Hitz.), though it might be used in a threatening sense, like Am. iv. 12, "prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." Most probably, however, though the verse contains anew the announcement of the coming universal judgement (ch. i. 2 ff.), the promise of iii. 9—13 is already in the prophet's mind. The judgement is not the last act of the drama; behind the storm of universal judgement rises clear the day of universal salvation. The exhortation to wait for Jehovah is parallel to ch. ii. 1—3.

until the day that I rise up to the prey] **for** the day, continuing *for me*. If this meaning be accepted, the impending judgement of God is expressed figuratively as a hostile attack by Him, and the question what is meant by the "prey" must not be asked: the "prey" is merely part of the metaphor. Both LXX and Syr., however, interpreted, "rise up *for a witness*" (reading *le'ēd* for Heb. *le'ad*), and this sense is followed by many commentators. Comp. Mic. i. 2, "let the Lord God be witness against you"; Ps. l. 7; Mal. iii. 5. On the expression "rise up" in reference to a witness cf. Ps. xxvii. 12, xxxv. 11; Deut. xix. 15; Job xvi. 8.

gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to
pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce
anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of
9 my jealousy. For then will I turn to the peoples a pure
[1]language, that they may all call upon the name of the

[1] Heb. *lip*.

to gather the nations] It is not implied that the nations shall be gathered to Jerusalem to be judged, as in later writings, e.g. Joel iii. 2; Is. lxvi. 18; Zech. xiv. 2, 12 ff.; the "gathering" merely expresses the idea that they shall be universally and simultaneously judged. The judgement is one embracing the whole earth, as ch. i. 18, and falls on Israel as well as on the nations.

9—13. THE CONVERSION OF THE NATIONS AND OF ISRAEL.

Though *v.* 8 describes the universal judgement, it is closely connected with *vv.* 9—13. The judgement is not an end in itself; the conversion of the nations follows upon the revelation of Jehovah in judgement (ch. ii. 11; cf. Is. lxvi. 18, 19). Verses 9, 10 speak of the nations, *vv.* 11—13 of Israel.

9. *For then...*] Scholars have found it difficult to reconcile *vv.* 9 and 10 with the preceding verses of this chapter. So G. A. Smith, Marti, Powis Smith, and, less certainly, Driver, regard the two verses as a later insertion by "an editor, actuated by more kindly and generous feelings towards the nations than are reflected by the foregoing threats" (Powis Smith). Even Driver says that the connexion with *vv.* 1—8 must be admitted to be very imperfect. "The terms of *v.* 8 imply not purification, but destruction: if, however, all the nations are destroyed, how can any remain to be converted?" But it is not necessary to regard *v.* 8 as implying the total destruction of all people good and bad alike, and the sweeping threats of i. 2, 3 obviously demand some qualification. It is precisely purification that appears to be in the prophet's mind at this point—purification first of the world at large (9, 10), and then of Judah (11—13), just as the book had opened with threats of destruction of the people in the same order. "For then" in *v.* 9 will then have its proper sense. After the destruction of the wicked among the peoples of the earth, the remnant shall be converted to serving God.

a pure language] **a pure lip**. The term *lip* often means "language" (Gen. xi. 1), but here it seems rather to denote the organ of speech. Comp. Is. vi. 5, 7, "I am a man of unclean lips...Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away." The construction is condensed, and the meaning is, *then will I turn to the peoples their lip into a pure lip*. Their lips were unclean either generally from their inward sinfulness, or especially from their taking the names of their false gods upon them (Ps. xvi. 4;

LORD, to serve him with one [1]consent. From beyond the 10
rivers of Ethiopia [2]my suppliants, even the daughter of

[1] Heb. *shoulder*. [2] Or, *shall they bring my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, for an offering unto me*

Hos. ii. 19). With purified lips they shall fitly call upon the name of the Lord.

serve him with one consent] lit. *with one shoulder*, or, *back*. The LXX, *under one yoke*, probably rightly interprets the figure, which is that of animals labouring together with a single yoke laid over their shoulders in common. On the general sense comp. Jer. xxxii. 39; Ezek. xi. 19, 20.

10. The verse is obscure on account of the uncertain meaning of several expressions in it. There are three main lines of interpretation, (*a*) R.V. text implies that the Jews carried off to the remotest lands will return to Jerusalem bringing their gifts (cf. Is. xi. 11, xxvii. 13 &c.); (*b*) R.V. marg. implies that the Gentiles themselves will bring back the dispersed Jews as an offering to the Lord (cf. Is. lx. 9, lxvi. 18); (*c*) Davidson, following Ewald, with two small emendations, suggests *Beyond the rivers of Cush they shall offer me incense, the daughter of* [Put] *shall bring me an offering*, the reference being to the service of Jehovah by all nations. Cf. Is. xviii. 7, xlv. 14; Ps. lxxii. 10. In this case the preposition rendered in R.V. *from* beyond denotes the place *where*, rather than the place *whence*. There are also various conjectural emendations, some of which will be noted later.

the rivers of Ethiopia] For Ethiopia or Cush, taken as a type of a distant nation, cf. ii. 12. The "waters of Ethiopia" would be the modern Atbara and Blue Nile.

my suppliants] The word does not occur again in this sense, though a verb *to supplicate*, from which it might be derived, is not uncommon (Gen. xxv. 21). In the sing. the word occurs Ezek. viii. 11 in the sense of *vapour* or *odour* of incense, and this sense, being parallel to "mine offering," might be adopted here.

even the daughter of my dispersed] Phrases like "daughter of Zion" (*v.* 14), of Babylon (Ps. cxxxvii. 8), of Edom (Lam. iv. 21), signify the city or country named with its inhabitants. There is always in such phrases the name of a *place*, and this suggests that under the word "my dispersed" (*pûṣai*) there lurks some proper name. Ewald suggested Put, which is often named in connexion with Cush (cf. on Nah. iii. 9). "The daughter of Put" would then be parallel to "beyond the rivers of Cush." Others have assumed that somewhat after the analogy of "daughter of Zion" in the sense of Zion with those inhabiting it, "the daughter of my dispersed" might mean *those composing* (comprised in) *my dispersed*. "My dispersed" must certainly refer to Jews; the view of Hitzig that they are the same as "those that escape" of the Gentiles

11 my dispersed, shall bring mine offering. In that day shalt
thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou
hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away
out of the midst of thee [1]thy proudly exulting ones, and
thou shalt no more be haughty in my holy mountain.
12 But I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor

[1] Or, *them that exult in thy majesty*

and carry tidings of the greatness of Jehovah to all nations (Is. lxvi. 18, 19), has no probability. Schwally suggests that the words rendered *my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed* are really an Aramaic gloss on "the rivers of Ethiopia" and mean "there, where they are dispersed." Powis Smith renders the words "the princes" (lit. he goats) "of the daughter of Put."

11. *In that day shalt thou not be ashamed*] The common expression "in that day" refers to the general period spoken of in the context, here the period after the judgement, when the people of God is saved and restored. To *be ashamed* might mean either to *feel* shame for, or to *bear* the shame of, former doings. The first sense is the more expressive. The former things have so completely passed away that they are forgotten, and no recollection of them calls up a blush of shame (Is. liv. 4, lxv. 16). Cf. Ezek. xxxix. 26. Or the meaning may be that the occasion for feeling shame will pass away with the destruction of the wicked doers.

thy proudly exulting ones] In Is. xiii. 3 the phrase is used of Jehovah's warriors, the Medes, filled with martial pride and exulting in battle; here it has a less dignified sense, being used of the self-confident and arrogant classes in Israel, whether prophets (*v.* 4) or politicians, the people of whom Am. vi. 13 speaks: "which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?" In the prophets religion is trust in Jehovah, and irreligion or sin is insensibility to His majesty and rule, and consequent pride and self-exaltation.

thou shalt no more be haughty] Cf. Is. iii. 16, "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks." Jer. xiii. 15.

12. *an afflicted and poor people*] Cf. Is. xiv. 32, "The Lord hath founded Zion, and in her shall the afflicted of his people take refuge." The rendering "afflicted," in its modern sense, is too strong; compare the last words of *v.* 13. The term is used of the Messiah, Zech. ix. 9, "*lowly*, and riding upon an ass"; comp. Is. lxvi. 2, "him that is *poor* and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word," where the term seems used in a moral or religious sense. "Afflicted" does not mean "in distress," but is the opposite of "powerful" (Hab. iii. 14), or "haughty" (Zeph. iii. 11). Perhaps "humble" is the best translation. This conception of a remnant of humble and godly people as representing the

people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.
The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; 13
neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth:
for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make
them afraid. Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; 14

true Israel is more characteristic of post-exilic times, and finds its echo in the Gospel.

trust in the name of the LORD] This expresses the characteristic of the lowly and poor people left in Zion. Trust in the Lord is the essential mark of true religion. Comp. the passages cited on *v.* 2.

13. *The remnant of Israel*] After the great judgement of the day of the Lord, only a remnant shall be left (Joel ii. 28—32). The idea that only a remnant shall be saved is common to all the prophets; Isaiah called his son Shear-jashub, "a remnant shall turn," making him a living sign to king (Is. vii. 3) and people of his conviction that a great judgement was impending. Cf. Is. x. 21—23.

shall not do iniquity] Comp. *v.* 5, where it is said of the Lord "he doeth no iniquity." In those days the people shall be like their God. His Spirit within them shall rule their life: Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.

for they shall feed] The figure is the very common one of flocks feeding and lying down in complete security. Cf. Is. xiv. 30; Mic. vii. 14, and Is. xvii. 2; Ezek. xxxiv. 25, 28. The word *for* does not assign their perfect security from all trouble without as the *reason* for the righteousness that shall prevail within, though of course security from all external evils would permit and help the peaceable expansion of the community and the growth of religious life among them. The words introduced by *for* rather *restate* under another aspect the peaceful and happy condition of the people, already described in *vv.* 12, 13 *a*.

14—20. THE JOY OF THE REDEEMED PEOPLE IN THE LORD'S PRESENCE AMONG THEM.

The prophet looks forward to the time when all Zion's afflictions shall be over, when she shall be redeemed and all her captive children restored, when the end contemplated by the Covenant, and towards which her history has been moving, even the Lord's full presence in the midst of her, shall have been reached. In those days Zion shall sing and shout for joy, for her name shall be *The Lord is there* (Ezek. xlviii. 35).

14. *Sing, O daughter of Zion*] The phrase "daughter of Zion" as representing the Jewish community always seems to express either exultation or pathos: cf. Is. x. 30, xxxvii. 22; Zech. ii. 10, ix. 9.

be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of
15 Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgements,
he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even
the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not [1]fear
16 evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem,
17 Fear thou not: [2]O Zion, let not thine hands be slack. The
LORD thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who
will save: he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will [3]rest
18 in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. [4]I will
gather them that [5]sorrow for the solemn assembly, who

[1] Another reading is *see*. [2] Or, and to *Zion* [3] Heb. *be silent*. [4] Or, *They have been sorrowful for the solemn assembly which I took away from thee*, for *the lifting up of reproach against her* [5] Or, *are removed from*

15. *taken away thy judgements*] The prophet transports himself and his people forward into the time of their final restoration and blessedness. The "judgements" of Zion are all those that have fallen on her during her chequered history; her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity pardoned (Is. xl. 2).

the king of Israel] Cf. Is. xli. 21, "produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob." Comp. Is. vi. 5, xliv. 6.

16. *let not thine hands be slack*] that is, *hang down*, in terror or paralysis. Jer. vi. 24; Heb. xii. 12.

17. *he will rejoice over thee*] Comp. Is. lxii. 5, lxv. 19.

he will rest in his love] Or, *he will be silent*. The words seem to mean that God's love will be so strong and deep as to hush motion or speech; it will be a silent ecstasy. But this is hardly in harmony with the next clause, and many scholars follow the LXX in reading "he will renew thee in his love." This involves only the smallest alteration in the Heb.

18. The verse is obscure, and possibly corrupt. If the text is in order, it is best to render *I will gather* (lit. *have gathered*, prophetic perfect) *them that sorrow away from the solemn assembly, upon whom reproach was a burden*. The words will then refer to the Jews in foreign lands who had felt a personal share in the "reproach," i.e. calamities of Jerusalem. For this idea of "reproach" cf. Is. liv. 4; Ezek. xxxvi. 15. But the Hebrew is certainly awkward, and there is a good deal to be said for the LXX, which reads the first two words of the verse (*them that sorrow away from the solemn assembly*) as *as in the day of a festival*, and join them to the preceding verse. The verse will then begin thus: *I will gather those that were of thee*.

the solemn assembly] In this phrase "solemn" bears its Latin

were of thee: [1]*to whom* the burden upon [2]her was a reproach. Behold, at that time I will deal with all them that 19
afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven away; and I will make them a praise and a name, whose shame hath been in all the earth. At that time will I bring you in, and at that time will I 20
gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise

[1] Or, *which hast borne the burden of reproach*
[2] According to some ancient authorities, *thee*.

meaning (*sollemnis*) of fixed or stated. So in Lev., Numb., and Chron. the word is usually rendered in R.V. *set feast*, whereas in the prophets it is often translated as *solemn assembly*. See Driver's note.

19. *deal with*] For this sinister sense of the verb cf. Ex. xxii. 14.

I will save her that halteth] The people are spoken of under the metaphor of a flock, in which are some that are lame, and to which belong some that have been driven away. Hence the use of the *fem.* gender. Comp. Ezek. xxxiv. 16, "I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back again that which was driven away." Mic. iv. 6, 7.

I will make them a praise and a name] Cf. Jer. xxxiii. 9, "and *this city* shall be to me for a name of joy, for a praise and for a glory, before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them." So Jer. xiii. 11. The precise sense is not clear. In the passages in Jer. the people, being righteous and blessed, are the *source* of praise and renown to Jehovah, whose people they are. But the meaning might be that the people themselves are the *object* of praise by the nations; Is. lxi. 9, lxii. 7. Both ideas are elsewhere expressed; Jehovah bestows His glory on Israel (Is. lx. 2), and this glory is reflected back upon Him, and He is glorified in Israel (Is. xliv. 23, xlix. 3, lx. 21, lxi. 3).

whose shame hath been in all the earth] The rendering is possible, though some scholars (Davidson, Driver, &c.) feel that it lays an unnatural emphasis on the pronoun *them*. Many therefore would omit the word rendered "their shame," but it is difficult to see why it should have crept in if not original. Halévy supplies a prep., *instead of* their shame, but it is on the whole better to keep to R.V. The LXX transposes the word to the next verse and renders "And they shall be ashamed at that time when I do good to you."

20. *and at that time will I gather you*] The sense is probably right, though the language of the original is very anomalous, and indeed untranslatable.

among all the peoples of the earth, when I bring again your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD.

bring again your captivity] See on ii. 7.

before your eyes] The deliverance shall not be delayed till their eyes are closed and be seen only by their children. Their own eyes shall see it. "This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." Cf. Is. lii. 8.

APPENDIX

Note 1. THE FALL OF NINEVEH.

Some further light has been cast upon the circumstances of the fall of Nineveh by the publication of an inscription of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon. The stele of Nabonidus, which is now in the Constantinople Museum, was discovered near Hilleh (Babylon), and has been described by Scheil in the *Recueil de Travaux* &c., published under the direction of Maspero, xviii., 1896; by Rev. C. H. W. Johns (now Canon Johns), Queens' College, Cambridge, in *Expository Times*, 1896; and later on by L. Messerschmidt in *Mittheilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, part i., 1896. The two points of interest are the date of the fall of Nineveh, and the part which the Babylonians under Nabopolassar took in its overthrow.

The inscription leaves the precise date of the fall of the city still somewhat uncertain. In col. x. of the inscription Nabonidus states that the temple of Sin, the moon-god, in Harran, had been destroyed by the Ummanmanda (Medes); that in the beginning of his reign he was exhorted in a dream to restore it, and that he accomplished its restoration in his third year, 54 years after it had been destroyed. As the reign of Nabonidus began in B.C. 555, his third year would be 553, and thus the destruction of the temple of Sin would have occurred B.C. 607. It is uncertain, however, whether the attack on Harran, resulting in the destruction of the temple, preceded the capture of Nineveh or followed it, or possibly occurred in the same year, and consequently the approximate date for the fall of Nineveh, 608—6, must still be left. The relation of the attack on Harran to the capture of Nineveh may yet be further elucidated.

With regard to those who actually overthrew Nineveh the inscription is more explicit. If col. ii. refers to the final destruction of the city, as it appears to do, those who accomplished it were the Ummanmanda (Medes) alone, the Babylonians having no part in it. In this respect the statement of Herodotus is confirmed. It may perhaps be inferred that a condition of hostilities existed between Babylon and Assyria. The inscription states that Marduk called in the Ummanmanda to *the aid* of Nabopolassar, and in order to avenge the indignities offered to himself at a former time by Sennacherib—the reference in the last words being to Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon and his deportation of Marduk to Assyria. It may not be quite easy to translate this statement

about Marduk's intervention and the *aid* to Nabopolassar into the actual movements of events, and discover the real relations of the Medes and Babylonians. Messerschmidt, relying on some other inscriptions, infers that the Babylonian army was operating in Mesopotamia, and that, owing to reverses inflicted by the Assyrians, the help of the Medes was invoked. These combinations of Messerschmidt and the whole question will no doubt be fully discussed by competent Assyrian scholars. It appears from the inscription that a number of cities in north Babylonia (Accad) took the part of Assyria against Babylon. A condition of friction between Babylon and Assyria was nothing uncommon, but it may now be considered as a point ascertained that the Babylonians took no actual part in the overthrow of Nineveh. It is a fact worth recalling in connexion with the discussion of this question that in 1889 Winckler expressed the opinion that any direct participation of the Babylonians in the destruction of Nineveh was very improbable, because such an act would have been regarded as a "misdeed," something of the nature of a sacrilege, just as Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon was regarded. Winckler's feeling is confirmed by the present inscription, in which the Babylonian king is exonerated of having had any part in the destruction of the temples of the gods, and (if the passage be rightly understood) even made to deprecate the violent wrath of Marduk and the excessive vengeance he had taken.

The relations of Babylon and Assyria and the course of events suggested by the inscription can hardly be said to give any additional plausibility to the interpretation of Habakkuk advocated with so much acuteness and learning by Prof. Budde (*Introd. to Hab.* p. 50 ff.).

It may be inferred from the stele of Nabonidus that Ummanmanda is not an ethnological name, and of itself gives no light regarding the race or nationality of the conquerors of Nineveh; the name is rather geographical, and equivalent generally to "northern peoples," including Medes, Scythians &c. When, therefore, Astyages is said to be of the Ummanmanda, this does not imply a strictly Scythian origin, and the remark regarding him, p. 7, founded on previous statements of Assyrian scholars (Winckler, *Untersuch.* p. 124 ff., Billerb.-Jerem., p. 96, note, with references), has to be modified. See Winckler's revisal of his former opinion, Messerschmidt, p. 71 ff. In a communication received from Mr C. H. W. Johns, before the publication of Messerschmidt's work, the true signification of the expression Ummanmanda was clearly indicated.

Note 2. On Zeph. ii. 4.

The expression, Zeph. ii. 4, "they shall drive out Ashdod *at the noonday*," occurring again Jer. xv. 8, is obscure. In an extract from Esarhaddon's Senjirli inscription given in Winckler's *Altorient. Untersuch.*, p. 100, the Assyrian king says, "Memphis, his capital, I took *ina mi-kit ûmi*," which Winckler renders, *bis zu der Mitte des Tages*. The similarity of the expression to the Heb., and also its use in speaking of the capture of a city, suggested that the phrase might be common to the two languages, and have the same meaning in both. Through the kindness of Principal Whitehouse I learn that Schrader in his Monograph on the Senjirli inscription reads the words *ina mi-shil ûmi*, which he would render *in the half of the day*, or, *by midday*. The phrase would thus express the rapidity with which, or the short time within which, Memphis was taken. This general sense is suitable both in Zeph. ii. 4 and in Jer. xv. 8. In the latter passage "suddenly" is parallel to "at noonday." Somewhat similar is the language Job iv. 20, "from a morning to an evening they are destroyed," i.e. in the briefest space of time; cf. Is. xxxviii. 12. More doubtful perhaps is Moab. Stone, l. 15, 16, "and I fought against it from the break of dawn until noon; and I took it."

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